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ART IN ENGLAND

1821-1837

Cambridge University Press  
Fetter Lane, London

*New York*

*Bombay, Calcutta, Madras*

*Toronto*

Macmillan

*Tokyo*

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*Exhibited at the Royal Academy 1827*

LADY PEEL

By Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

# ART IN ENGLAND,

1821-1837

By

WILLIAM T. WHITLEY

Author of

*Thomas Gainsborough*

*Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*

and

*Art in England, 1800-1820*



CAMBRIDGE

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1930

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

## PREFACE

THE present volume is intended as a continuation of my *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*; and *Art in England, 1800-1820*. Its object is to give information, additional to that already published in books on the subject, concerning the history of art in England from 1821 to 1837—when the Victorian era commenced. During this period the principal event was the establishment of the National Gallery, of the origin and foundation of which, and of its early history, I am able to give a much fuller description than any that has appeared as yet. My account of the efforts to found the Gallery, and of the apathy with which its opening in 1824 was received, includes the hitherto unpublished correspondence between the Government and the executors of John Julius Angerstein. The original National Gallery was composed of the collection formed by Angerstein and regarded as one of the best in the country and the correspondence contains a detailed valuation of the pictures made for the Government in 1823. The newspaper comments, in letters and articles, on the administration of the infant National Gallery and the pictures purchased for it, throw interesting light on the progress of the institution, and are sometimes expressed in terms of singular frankness.

The inner history of the Royal Academy, from the early days of Lawrence as President to its removal to the newly built galleries in Trafalgar Square, is described from the Minutes and other records preserved at Burlington House. I give, among many other interesting details, the figures, never before published, of the elections of the Academicians and Associates during the period covered. The story is told in Chapter IV of the foundation of a rival institution to the Royal Academy, the Society of British Artists, and of the building of the gallery which the Society still occupies in Suffolk Street.

## PREFACE

From contemporary newspapers and magazines I have obtained many comments on the pictures exhibited at the Royal Academy, the British Institution and other galleries. Some of these are curious, especially those that deal with the later developments of the art of Turner. There are many criticisms of Constable, who was by no means neglected by the press, as some of his biographers suggest; and I tell, for the first time, the story of the long and bitter persecution of this great artist begun by an anonymous newspaper correspondent in 1830, a persecution of which Leslie says nothing.

A change of policy made by *The Times* in connection with art criticism is noticed in Chapter III. Details are given in Chapter XIV of the failure of Eastlake's effort to procure for the nation Sir Thomas Lawrence's famous collection of drawings by Old Masters. In the same chapter is an account, based on material supplied by Eastlake, of the formation of the collection and the sources from which Lawrence obtained the drawings.

Notes are given on some of the important art sales of the period, including those of Watson Taylor in 1823 and 1832. The second of these, at Erlestoke, is unrecorded by Redford or Graves, although Beckford declared that the treasures then dispersed exceeded in magnificence even those of Fonthill. A list of a collection of paintings by Highmore, sold in 1826, will be found in Chapter VI; and among other sales noticed are those of the Marchioness of Thomond, Lord de Tabley, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Benjamin West. An account is given in Chapter XIV of an unsuccessful attempt to sell by auction Gainsborough's *Morning Walk*, a picture regarded to-day as one of the finest and most valuable works of that artist.

Letters are included in this volume from the Duke of Wellington, Lord Liverpool, Lord Farnborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Walter Scott, Sir William Beechey, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Sir George Beaumont, Sir Henry Raeburn, Sir David Wilkie, Constable, Bewick, Etty, John Nash the architect, Flaxman, C. R. Leslie, Turner, Maria Cosway, Haydon and Nollekens. Many of these letters are now published for the first time. New

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information is also given concerning Fuseli, Bonington, Lord Egremont, William Ward the engraver, Lord de Tabley, Crome, William Segulier and others. The Appendix contains a description of the National Gallery and its contents in 1838, when it was first established in Trafalgar Square.

My thanks are due to the President and Council of the Royal Academy for allowing me to examine and quote from the Minutes of that institution from 1821 to 1837; to Captain Holme for his permission to include in this book some of my notes in *The Art Collections of the Nation*, published by *The Studio* in 1920; to Mr H. M. Hake, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, for Constable's letter of February 2nd, 1828; and to Mr H. Isherwood Kay of the National Gallery, for the letter, quoted in Chapter iv, from Thomas Birch Wolfe, nephew of Sir Henry Bate Dudley.

WILLIAM T. WHITLEY



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## CHAPTER I

1821

THE opening years of the nineteenth century, of which I have written in *Art in England*, 1800–1820, witnessed the deaths of many painters who had been prominent in the days of Reynolds and Gainsborough. But some of the men who had worked or exhibited in that great period were still practising in 1821, and among them were Cosway, Fuseli, Northcote, Raeburn, Stothard, Beechey and Lawrence. Of the sculptors Nollekens, the oldest, had long ceased to exhibit, but Flaxman still maintained his position as the most distinguished of the imaginative artists of his type. Another imaginative artist of the same period but of a different kind, William Blake, was also living in 1821, and evolving in poverty and obscurity his remarkable illustrations to the Book of Job.

George III, the founder of the Royal Academy, had been dead nearly a year, and Benjamin West, the Academy's second President, almost as long. George IV was now King and West's chair at the Academy was filled by Sir Thomas Lawrence. Both the changes were for good. George IV loved pictures and was a discerning collector, with much better taste than that of his father. Lawrence, an accomplished and occasionally a brilliant painter, was a man of the world, of good address and an excellent speaker. He was besides conscientious, as West had been, in the performance of his duties as President.

So far, no progress had been made towards the foundation of a National Gallery, although the need for it was generally admitted. The Dulwich Gallery had been opened, but was not easily accessible to Londoners, and admission to it was denied to all but those who could obtain tickets. The ordinary Englishman, therefore, had still no opportunity of seeing pictures without

payment or restrictions. At the Royal Academy no alterations of importance had been made during the first twenty years of the century, but Somerset House was not, as it was in 1800, the only place at which an artist could show his work. The British Institution, established by private generosity in 1806, had prospered in spite of the constant complaints of favouritism, and its beautiful rooms in Pall Mall offered space for exhibition, and opportunity for sale of the pictures by painters of all schools.

To the exhibitions in Pall Mall many of the Academicians contributed, including Lawrence and Wilkie, who were the two most popular painters of the period. The achievements of Turner, though fully appreciated by some, were not always understood by the public at large, and crowds never gathered before the canvases of the great landscape painter as they did before the subject-pictures of Wilkie, the portraits of beautiful women and children by Lawrence, and the extraordinary imaginings of John Martin. Other prominent artists of 1821 were Callcott, William Collins, Hilton, James Ward and Mulready; and among the portrait painters, in addition to Lawrence, were Raeburn, Jackson, Pickersgill and Phillips. Haydon, too, had always a following of his own.

Constable, one of the greatest men of the period, was not appreciated in 1821 as he is to-day. But he was not neglected to the extent suggested by his biographer Leslie, who implies that he was but little noticed by the newspapers. As a matter of fact the critics mentioned him frequently and more often than not with approval. Some of them supported him even when he was ridiculed for scattering small lights—"showers of whitewash" as they were called—over his pictures. On the whole Constable was by no means badly treated by the press, except in the one notorious instance mentioned by me in the preface.

The first event of importance in the London art world in 1821 was the election of a Royal Academician in the place of Benjamin West, the late President. The new Academician was to be chosen from the ranks of the Associates, of whom Constable was one. But Constable's name was never mentioned in connection with

the election of this year, in which William Daniell, the nephew of Thomas Daniell, R.A., was second to the successful candidate, Edward Hodges Baily, the sculptor. Baily, who modelled the well-known statue of Nelson in Trafalgar Square, defeated Daniell by sixteen votes to seven. Four votes were given to Washington Allston, the American painter.

Almost coincident with the Academy election was the opening of the spring exhibition at the British Institution at which the picture most discussed was one of the best known of the works of John Martin, who at this period was remarkably popular. His *Belshazzar's Feast*, shown for the first time on this occasion, was hailed as a masterpiece by the critics. One of them described it in the *European Magazine* as "a poetical and sublime conception in the grandest style of the art—a glorious work". Even so sober and competent a judge as Wilkie was impressed by *Belshazzar's Feast*. He mentions it in his *Diary* as the best picture in the exhibition, and speaks of several others as "in a small way good". One of the pictures thus moderately praised was a landscape by John Crome. Wilkie little thought that a hundred years afterwards the work of Crome would fill an honoured place among the masters in a National Gallery that could find no room for a picture by Martin.

Crome's landscape at the British Institution, *Heath Scene, near Norwich* (40), was perhaps the first of his pictures to be noticed other than casually by any of the London critics. The only earlier mention I have seen was in a magazine of 1809, *The Beau Monde*, whose critic noticed the pleasant, sunny effect of a picture by Crome at the Academy. But in 1821 the *Heath Scene*, was the subject of many favourable comments. "Let this little picture be compared", said the *Sun*, "with the landscapes of Rembrandt or Koninck, and its colour, keeping, power and tones will be found as true, and the pencilling as certain." The *Guardian* thought that parts of the landscape were "very beautiful, and evincing an eye for the truly picturesque". The *London Magazine* described the *Heath Scene* as "an enviable picture", and the *Examiner* mentioned it as worthy of the approbation of its

purchaser. This was Sir John Swinburne, the grandfather of the poet, who paid thirty guineas for his acquisition. After praising a landscape by another Norfolk man, Stark, which had been bought by Thomas Phillips, R.A., the *Examiner* said: "To this artist and to Mr Crome, the British Institution is much indebted, and from their talents the painters of Norwich have obtained a very increased *éclat*".

Unfortunately the Norwich School, as it is now known, was to gain nothing from any future achievements of Crome, for this remarkable artist died on April 21st, immediately after the close of the exhibition at which his work had for the first time called forth the approbation of the London newspapers. At Norwich his local reputation had long been considerable, though not as great as he deserved. The editor of one of the Norfolk journals, the *Norwich, Yarmouth and Lynn Courier*, did not even know what branch of art he practised, and in his paper of April 28th, 1821, passed over his death with no more notice than the following: "Sunday last, aged fifty-two, died Mr Crome, miniature painter of this city".

But the better-informed public of Norwich and its neighbourhood knew well that in Crome they possessed a local artist of uncommon ability. Dawson Turner, the Yarmouth banker and connoisseur, writing of Crome after his death, said: "I had the greatest regard for him. I enjoyed his society and admired his talents. I valued the man, and highly appreciated the good sense which led him to confine himself exclusively to the representation of nature and to be satisfied with her as she offered herself to his eyes". Crome, however, though his landscapes show little imaginative quality, could admire it in the work of others. Dawson Turner said of one of the pictures by Crome in his collection, *Scene on the River at Norwich*: "He painted it for me but a year or two before his death, immediately on his return from his midsummer journey to London, with his whole soul full of admiration at the effects of light and shade, and poetic feeling and grandeur of conception, displayed in Turner's landscapes at the Academy".

Crome, who was one of the originators, and for some time President, of the Norwich Society of Artists, was of humble birth and poorly educated. Anderdon, to whom we owe the well-known "extended" catalogues of the Royal Academy, says that he was "a provincial man in all regards—manner, language, dialect, dress". He was apprenticed to a man named Whisler, of Norwich, who has generally been described as a sign and coach painter. Wodderspoon mentioned Whisler as such in one of the articles on the Norwich artists contributed by him to the *Norwich Mercury*. But a correspondent of that journal, whose experience was longer than that of Wodderspoon, corrected him on this point. Writing as "Connoisseur", he said: "Whisler was a house-painter—a grade lower than you have represented him. It was while with him that Crome's talent was first elicited, when probably he painted the signs of inns—the Shoulder of Mutton, the Labour in Vain, and a third I remember to have seen at Mr Finch's sale. Painting was a passion pervading Crome's mind even in death. I remember his eldest son, John Bernay Crome, telling me that 'Hobbema' was one of the last words he uttered". Though uneducated his home surroundings were perhaps more cultured than his biographers have supposed, for in 1818 the above-mentioned John Bernay Crome, then beginning to tread in his father's footsteps in art, read a paper, "Remarks on Painting as connected with Poetry", at one of the meetings of the Norwich Philosophical Society.

A passion for costly books appears, oddly enough, to have been one of Crome's characteristics. He possessed, among many others, Boydell's Shakespeare with the large and small prints, in nine volumes, half-bound in russia; Ottley and Tresham's work on the Marquis of Stafford's gallery, published at twenty guineas; Smirke's *Don Quixote* in four volumes, bound in bronzed morocco with silk linings; Reed's Shakespeare in twenty-one volumes bound in russia; and W. H. Pyne's *Microcosm*, published at ten guineas. In the catalogue of his sale, most of Crome's books are described as expensively bound.

No biographer of Crome, I think, mentions the number of his

children, but he was the father of twenty-four, according to a writer in the *Norwich Mercury*. In the autumn of 1860 a loan exhibition was held at Norwich, composed of the work of deceased Suffolk and Norfolk artists, and on September 29th the *Norwich Mercury* announced that Crome's son, Joseph, had lent to the committee three portraits, two of his father and one of his mother. One of the two of Crome, painted by Dr Woodhouse, represented him as a youth, the other, by Opie, as middle-aged. "The portrait of Mrs Crome, a good wife who brought her husband no fewer than twenty-four children, was painted by Michael Sharp." This statement is surprising, but is probably correct, as it was published in a Norwich newspaper and concerns a Norwich celebrity. No contradiction of it appeared in the *Norwich Mercury*.

The exhibition at the Royal Academy, which was opened a few days after Crome's death, was arranged by Abraham Cooper, William Collins, and David Wilkie. The dinner which preceded the opening was attended by the Duke of Wellington and five other dukes, and a host of distinguished or fashionable people. Not the least interesting of the company was the young French painter, Géricault, whose large picture, *The Raft of the Medusa*, had been exhibited in London with great success in 1820, and was now on view in Dublin. It was Lawrence who proposed, at a meeting of the Council, that Géricault should be invited to the Academy dinner.

Turner was unrepresented at the exhibition of 1821, Wilkie showed only two small and comparatively unimportant pictures, and there was no work of popular attraction except perhaps Leslie's *May Day in the time of Elizabeth*, which, according to the *Morning Herald*, was purchased by Mr Murray of Albemarle Street for three hundred guineas. Yet on May 13th it was stated in the *Guardian* that the crowds at that Academy had been so dense during the week which had just passed that it was impossible to see the pictures properly except early in the morning. Among the works admired by the critics were the landscapes by Collins, and the *Portrait of a Lady*, by Raeburn, which was

described in one of the newspapers as of the highest character in its own class. "The countenance and expression are beautiful," says the writer, "the attitude elegant and well chosen; and the colour is nearly free from that disagreeable greenness which so commonly pervades the work of this artist." Lawrence was praised too, but with reservations. His portrait of Benjamin West and the group of Mrs Baring and her children found many admirers, but the new President of the Royal Academy cannot have been altogether pleased with a note on his portraits published in the *London Chronicle*. The note, amusing, but in very bad taste in its reference to the dead Princess, was as follows:

Sir Thomas Lawrence's present picture of Lord Londonderry is better than the last, but too pinky and gay, as if he had just put on a new skin as well as new robes. Sir Thomas's female portraits are, as usual, his best, especially that of Lady Louisa Lambton, which is one of the most pleasing portraits we have ever seen. The Princess Charlotte, however, is a sad business. Her Royal Highness may have been pale, but there is no reason why she should appear to have been boiled.

The critic of the *London Chronicle*, who is the only writer to express his regret at the absence of Turner, says nothing about Constable, although he showed this year the best known and the most discussed of all his pictures. This is the one now in the National Gallery and described in the catalogue as *The Hay Wain*, but exhibited at the Academy of 1821 as *Landscape—Noon* (339). The *London Chronicle* was not the only journal to ignore *Landscape—Noon*. Nothing was said about it by *The Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Sun*, the *Morning Post*, or the *Globe*. The *Morning Herald* was equally silent, although enthusiastic about a minor work of Constable's, *A Shower* (132), which was described as admirable for fidelity and truth. "The lucid appearance of the clouds, and the seeming reality of the descending shower, cannot be exceeded."

*Landscape—Noon* was praised by the *Observer*, which said of it:

There is a fine freshness of colouring; and a great tact in the disposition of the figures and the relief of the different objects, so as to make the entire harmonize, is apparent throughout. The still-life is excellent, and the great

masses of foliage have a peculiar but not unnatural richness. If we were to make any objection we should say that the foreground was perhaps a little too light, but this might have been necessary for the relief of the masses at the back of the landscape. There is much skill shown in this performance, of which Ruysdael has evidently been the model. It is, however, original enough to escape the servility with which imitations are generally branded. Mr Constable is certainly not one of the *servum pecus*.

Of all the journals that I have seen, the only one that described Constable's work as a masterpiece was the *Examiner*, which published a glowing description of it that suggests a sunnier, brighter picture than the one now hanging in the National Gallery. No doubt Constable's work is much lower in tone to-day than it was in 1821, when it was thus described by the *Examiner*:

No. 339, *Landscape—Noon*, is a picture of Mr Constable's which we think approaches nearer to the actual look of rural nature than any modern landscape whatever. An able judge of art, who saw and admired it with us, thought it a little mannered, from a certain sparkle there is over it. We do not think so, but, granting the objection to be just, it is a mere slight flaw in a diamond; for what an open air and fresh and leafy look it has, with its cottage and foreground so brightly and yet so modestly contrasting their reddish hue with the green and blue and yellowish tints of the trees, fields and sky—a sky which for noble volume of cloud and clear light we have never at any time seen exceeded except by Nature. How tastefully is the bit of red introduced upon the collar of the team of horses, in the sky and tree-reflecting water, and how does the eye delight to peep, with the luxurious feeling of a Faun or a Sylvan, under and through the clustering foliage into the meadows and hills beyond. How completely in keeping is the work throughout in its unaffected pencilling, colour and character. We challenge the Dutch Masters to show us anything better than this.

This picture, *The Hay Wain*, as it is now called, is the one exhibited in Paris in 1824, and said to have influenced beneficially the French School of landscape painting. *The Hay Wain* had been talked about in Paris two years before it was exhibited there, owing to the praises bestowed upon it by a French writer who saw it at the Royal Academy in 1821. The late Lord Plymouth, who refers to this in his *John Constable, R.A.* thought that the Frenchman in question was Amédée Pichot, the author of *Lettres sur l'Angleterre*. But Pichot does not mention *The Hay*



*From the painting in the National Gallery*

**THE HAY WAIN**  
By John Constable, R.A.



Wain in his *Lettres sur l'Angleterre*, which describe a visit to England in 1822, the year after the picture was exhibited. He praised Constable only in general terms and thought his pictures at the Royal Academy of 1822 inferior to those shown by Callcott.

It was Charles Nodier, not Amédée Pichot, who proclaimed in Paris the merits of the work of Constable and thus introduced the great landscape painter to the French public. Nodier, who was on intimate terms with Pichot, was in England in 1821 and wrote a little book on his experiences here, of which a translation, entitled *Promenade from Dieppe*, was published in London in 1822. Nodier visited the Royal Academy in 1821 and was so charmed with Constable's landscape that he mentions no other picture when recording his impressions of the exhibition. He says:

In painting, landscapes and seaviews are the pieces in which the English have the fewest rivals in Europe. Some of their pictures almost surpass every idea that one can form to one's self of perfection in this style of painting, but the palm of the exhibition belongs to a large landscape by Constable with which the ancient or modern masters have very few masterpieces that could be put in opposition. Near, it is only broad daubings of ill-laid colours which offend the touch as well as the sight, they are so coarse and uneven. At the distance of a few steps it is a picturesque country, a rustic dwelling, a low river where little waves foam over the pebbles, a cart crossing a pond. It is water, air and sky; it is Ruysdael, Wouwerman or Constable.

Before the close of the Academy another exhibition was opened and was for a time extraordinarily popular. It was composed of pictures by the late President of the Royal Academy, Benjamin West, and attracted ninety-five thousand visitors during the first twelve months they were on view. West's pictures were shown in galleries built for the purpose on the garden of his former residence in Newman Street. One of these galleries was seventy-six feet in length by forty-five in breadth—about the same size as the Third Gallery at Burlington House. They were erected by West's two dutiful sons, Raphael and Benjamin, and were planned by John Nash, the designer of the original Regent Street. An interesting description of the galleries is given by Robert

Hunt, Leigh Hunt's brother, who was related to West and had been familiar with his house since childhood:

Many will recollect the part of the long picture-covered avenue which turned to the left in its continuation to Mr West's two large painting-rooms and one smaller, all filled with pictures and seen by private visitors, to two others not seen, and to a sixth filled with plaster casts. This part of the avenue, which from infancy we have traversed in our frequent visits of friendship and of pictorial pleasure, and along which the sound of the welcome and firmly treading footsteps of the excellent master still—and will for ever—sound in our hearts, is now called the entrance gallery, and opens into the largest picture-room in England, which connects (through an arched opening) with one beyond it. In the great room are the two largest works, *Death on the Pale Horse* and *Christ Rejected*.

The light in the great room is divested of glare by means of a lofty awning, which, supported on four slender columns, forms an inner roof covering the entire room except a few feet from the circumference, and which, by admitting the pure light from the sky on the pictures only, gives the clearest view of them, while the eye is protected by the subdued and sober light throughout the rest of the room.

The lighting of the gallery in this fashion was West's own idea, and had often been discussed by him, but the critic of the *Monthly Magazine* declared that it was wholly unsuitable for the exhibition of his work. He said that West's poor, thin colour could not stand the concentrated light and that his pictures had looked better when shown in other galleries. The walls of all the rooms were hung with crimson cloth, and the frames of the *Christ Rejected* and the *Death on the Pale Horse* were draped with purple velvet. Nearly a hundred pictures were shown, including those executed at Windsor for George III, which had been presented to West's sons by George IV. The exhibition covered the entire range of West's working life, from his first painting, executed in Philadelphia when he was a child, to the last, a somewhat florid study, *Boys and Grapes*, finished at Newman Street not long before his death. The attitude of the press towards West's collected work was generally respectful and occasionally reverential. The reviewer of the *British Press* said of this exhibition in Newman Street:

It would seem superfluous to go into any observations on the pictures,

especially the *Christ Rejected* and the *Death on the Pale Horse*, which have been recently before the public. The babble of ephemeral criticism has with respect to them begun to subside; they are now fittest objects for thoughtful silence and the meditation of students seeking improvement. The lofty and tranquil spirit of the artist seems to pervade the whole. His reign in fine taste is now perfectly established. The carpings of jealousy and the shades of professional and unmerited obloquy are gone.

Equally flattering to West was the following opinion of the *Morning Herald*:

Upon the whole this magnificent exhibition appears to have the same effect upon those who view it as Reynolds declared the great works of Rubens in Flanders produced on him—namely, while we are before the pictures and under their fascinating influence, we conceive we have never before seen so great powers exerted in art. And it is not until we are removed from their influence that we can acknowledge an inferiority in West to any other painter whatever.

The exhibition of West's pictures remained open for several years but did not maintain its earlier popularity. In 1832 the large gallery was acquired by the followers of Edward Irving and was used for some time as a chapel.

West's largest pictures were more than rivalled in size by James Ward's immense *Allegorical Painting of the Triumph at Waterloo*, which was exhibited at the Egyptian Hall in May. A sketch for this picture was shown at the British Institution in 1816, and pleased the Directors so much that they commissioned Ward to carry it out on a large scale, on a canvas of thirty-five by twenty-one feet. Ward's composition was so confused and involved that it was impossible to understand it without the aid of the lengthy descriptive pamphlet given away at the gallery, in which it was stated that the picture represented "The Genius of Wellington on the Car of War, supported by Britannia and attended by the Seven Cardinal Virtues, commanding away the Demons, Anarchy, Rebellion and Discord, with the Horrors of War". The picture was placed on view on April 30th, and was criticized the next day by the *Morning Herald* in the following terms:

The public has never been presented with a work of art exhibiting a more eccentric union of licentious genius—if genius it can properly be called—and

puerile imbecility, than this picture by Mr Ward, R.A. The most daring violations of nature, consistency, truth and propriety; the most grotesque conceits, the most unbounded extravagances, horror and loathsomeness, are here embodied under the extraordinary name of Allegory.

Nevertheless there were some who praised and affected to understand Ward's gigantic work, which was afterwards presented by the British Institution to the Royal Hospital at Chelsea, where it was hung in the hall without stretcher or frame. J. T. Smith saw it there, with the lower half projecting over a gallery and the upper part forming an inclined plane on which the dust had settled. It was afterwards taken down and rolled up, and remained thus until 1879, when it was handed over to the artist's son, George Raphael Ward, the engraver.

Two exhibitions of this season that call for notice were those of the works of John Glover and Thomas Christopher Hofland, the landscape painters. The first-named was the artist whom Constable mentions sarcastically as "our own Glover", a man extremely successful in his day, and with a good opinion of his own work, as he showed at his exhibition by challenges to Claude and Richard Wilson. Glover at this time had more admirers and an infinitely larger professional income than Constable, and was ranked before him by some of the critics. One of these in noticing the exhibition says of him: "As a landscape painter Mr Glover stands in the first rank of British artists; and so conscious is he of his own powers that he has actually placed in the present exhibition one of the most beautiful pictures by Claude Lorraine and the best landscape by Wilson". And the critic was of opinion that when due allowance had been made for the mellowness that time alone could give to a picture, Glover's landscapes did not suffer by comparison with those of the masters mentioned. Hofland, another painter of great temporary reputation, was a man with many friends, among the critics and at the picture galleries. He was so consistently well hung at the British Institution that Hazlitt in reviewing one of its exhibitions hinted broadly at undue influence. But the Academy, where he had failed to obtain election as an Associate, was less kind, and he

had been warned that a very large picture he had sent to Somerset House, a view of Richmond from Twickenham Park, might not be hung. He had therefore withdrawn it, and showed it, with other works from his brush, at a private gallery in Bond Street.

In the middle of May, Cosway, now in his eighty-first year, sent to the auction room the greater part of the vast accumulation of pictures, bronzes, marbles, cabinets, tapestries, and other objects of art that he had gathered together in his house at Stratford Place, which he was leaving for a smaller residence in Edgware Road. Cosway had always been a great collector, and his possessions, to use the words of the auctioneer, George Stanley, comprised "pictures fit for a national gallery, and a museum for the virtuoso", but his sale suffered, unfortunately, because its date coincided with that of another of greater public interest.

This was the sale in May of the property of the late Marchioness of Thomond (Mary Palmer), the favourite niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had died of apoplexy in the preceding September. Lady Thomond inherited from Sir Joshua many pictures as well as his prints and books, and other things of interest, all of which were now sold by Christie, whose rooms (at this time in Pall Mall, next to Schomberg House) were "crowded beyond precedent" on the days of the sale. Many artists were present, including Haydon, who regarded the event as a triumph for English art. "A fine Teniers," he said, "a respectable Titian, and a Correggio with affidavits, were put up, knocked down, and carried off with comparative indifference; but no sooner was a picture by Reynolds elevated on the pole than all eyes were directed to it and all buyers eager for bidding, and the question became, not who should get the best bargain but who should possess the finest work".

The Correggio to which Haydon refers was *The Marriage of St Catherine*, and what he calls its "affidavits" were two inscriptions on the back of the picture. One of its former owners had written there his devotional thanks for having been permitted to obtain the Correggio, and a declaration that it should never go

out of his family. Below this Sir Joshua had written, "I so far subscribe to the above resolution of Signor Guidiccioni that no money shall ever tempt me to part with this picture. April 17th, 1790". The Correggio was bought by the Duke of Northumberland for two hundred and fifteen guineas. Many paintings from Sir Joshua's own hand were included in the sale and realized what were then regarded as high prices. A self-portrait of the artist, shown holding a book, was the subject of a spirited competition between Lord Mulgrave and a bidder whose name is not mentioned by the recorder of the incident. "The portrait", he says, "continued to be contested several times after the auctioneer had supposed the bargain closed, but in the end Lord Mulgrave obtained it for two hundred and thirty-four guineas."

Bidding was keen also for a book of rough notes and sketches made by Sir Joshua in Italy, which Turner was anxious to possess as a relic of a great artist of whom he always spoke with admiration and respect. The reporter of the *Morning Herald* says of this book and its sale:

The writing in it, which was scribbled in all directions, was interspersed by coarse sketches, apparently illustrative. The cover was a piece of flaccid parchment, tied with a string of dirty tape. The whole, from its age and service presented no very handsome appearance, but the anxiety about the room to obtain a view of it was very great. After a warm contested bidding between Mr Soane, R.A., Mr Turner, R.A., and Mr Herschel, the last-named gentleman obtained it for a hundred guineas.

Turner, though he failed to obtain the note-book, bought a sketch by Reynolds of the head of Admiral Keppel. Another minor but interesting purchase was made by James Boswell, the son of Dr Johnson's biographer, who bought for ten guineas the plaster bust of the doctor that had adorned Sir Joshua's house in Leicester Fields. The auctioneer on this occasion was James Christie the second, who concluded the proceedings on the last day with a graceful allusion that was worthy of his eminent father. "The last lot offered", says the *Globe*, "was a bust of Michael Angelo. When it came to the hammer Mr Christie observed that as 'Michael Angelo' were the last words of Sir

Joshua Reynolds in his final Discourse given at the Royal Academy, he should conclude the sale by disposing of the bust of Sir Joshua's favourite artist."

Interesting sales in 1821 of which little or nothing has been written were those of the collections of Robert Adam, the famous architect, Mr Kneller and Mr William Lock. In the Adam sale at Christie's, on July 9th, the pictures included two portraits each, by Fragonard, of Robert Adam and his brother James, painted at different periods of their lives. The second sale, held a few days earlier by Phillips, was of "a few distinguished portraits and a small collection of pictures, principally formed by the late Sir Godfrey Kneller". They were sold by order of his relatives and had been removed from a mansion in Wiltshire. This was the statement in Phillips' first advertisement. In the second, which gave particulars of many of the pictures, it was announced that they were from Donhead Hall, and were sold by order of Godfrey Kneller, Esq., a descendant of Sir Godfrey. It was of Donhead Hall that Constable's friend, Archdeacon Fisher, wrote to him: "I dined yesterday at the house built by Sir Godfrey Kneller, that man of wigs and drapery. On the staircase hung a beautiful portrait of Pope by him".

The third sale, by Sotheby, was of the collection of prints and drawings formed by William Lock, the elder, of Norbury Park, and containing, "a numerous assembly of the works of Richard Wilson, R.A." The Wilson drawings numbered 221, all Italian subjects, and were sold in lots for a sum total of £83. 8s. The principal lot, a sketch-book containing twenty drawings (all Roman) in bistre or black and white chalk, realized £3. 5s. William Lock the elder, who obtained the drawings from Wilson, died in 1810, and his son William Lock the younger, the reputed famous draughtsman, had lately sold the family seat, Norbury Park, with its well-known landscape-room painted by George Barret, R.A.

He was this year selling the pictures and drawings from Norbury, but had reserved one of the latter for presentation to the Royal Academy, in whose Life School he had been allowed to

work as an amateur. In the Minutes of December 4th it is recorded that an announcement was made by the President that "he had been commissioned by Mr Lock to present to the Academy an original and valuable Cartoon, the *Leda* of Michael Angelo". The cartoon was hung over the chimney piece of the School of Painting and remained there until the Academy removed from Somerset House. Two other works were acquired by the Academy this year, the well-known copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, painted by Marco d'Oggione, now hanging in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House; and Sir Joshua's portrait of his assistant, Giuseppe Marchi. The copy of the Leonardo, which had been exhibited in London in 1817, was now offered to the Academicians for six hundred guineas, and its purchase, proposed by Beechey and seconded by Flaxman, was unanimously agreed to, at a General Assembly summoned for the purpose. The acquisition of this valuable copy, which had been exhibited all over Europe, appears to have been due to Lawrence, as Fuseli speaks of it as "rescued from a random pilgrimage by the courage and vigilance of our President".

Wilkie says in a letter to Andrew Geddes written on December 30th, 1821: "The Royal Academy has bought *The Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci, the copy formerly shown in Pall Mall. It is now placed in the Great Room, behind the Professor's chair; it has been varnished and looks magnificent. We are all much pleased with this purchase".

The portrait of Marchi was a bequest to the Academy of Henry Edridge, A.R.A., who died in April of this year a few weeks after his election to an Associateship. His nephew and executor, Mr Rice, wrote to the Council soon after his death and said that it had always been the wish of Edridge that the Academy should possess this portrait, which he would send to them if it would be acceptable. Marchi, who was the first pupil of Sir Joshua and worked for him for many years, was born in Rome and came to England with his master in 1752. Henry Moser, who knew Marchi well, declared that the portrait was an excellent likeness of him.

Cosway, who was the senior painter-member of the Academy, did not long survive the sale by Stanley of his pictures and objects of art. He died in July in the house in Edgware Road to which he had removed, after a lingering illness which had long prevented him from working. Mrs Cosway, writing in December, 1820, to Minasi, the engraver, tells him that she no longer has any music or company. "The health and age of my husband", she says, "keeps me sequestered from the world to play the nurse rather than the Elegant. You have no reason to reprove my husband for not answering you, he has not the use of his hand and he was always lazy in writing." Cosway, like Romney, disliked writing, and his letters are very rare, as Dr Williamson discovered when he wrote the painter's life. In earlier years Mrs Cosway had "played the Elegant" to some purpose. She had figured prominently in society and her husband's house in Pall Mall had been the scene of frequent concerts and other entertainments.

All Cosway's property was left to his wife, who had a high opinion of her husband's talents and preserved for some time everything that had come from his hands. His paintbox, which had belonged to Rubens, she gave as a souvenir to Sir Thomas Lawrence. Cosway, who was a vain man, is said to have wished that his body should be interred near the grave of Rubens at Antwerp, but as this was impracticable he was buried in Marylebone Church. His coffin was conveyed there with some state on July 12th—"in a hearse drawn by six beautiful horses, followed by five coaches-and-four". A long train of private carriages followed the coaches, and Lawrence, Soane, Richard Westmacott and James Ward were among the mourners.

In the autumn the Royal Academy Schools were the scene of a disturbance that approached a riot. It was not caused by the students but by disappointed visitors to one of Carlisle's lectures. Carlisle, who was Professor of Anatomy, liked to make a sensation and to shock or surprise his audiences. Hazlitt attended one of his lectures, at which the Professor, according to his usual custom, appeared on the platform in full Court dress with bag-

wig and cocked hat. The essayist, who came to scoff, for he had despised Carlisle since he had heard him speak of "the uselessness of poetry", almost fainted when the lecturer, to illustrate some point, passed round among the audience two dinner plates, one containing the heart and the other the brains of a man. Carlisle sometimes engaged well-known prizefighters to pose for him, and on another occasion a troupe of Chinese jugglers displayed extraordinary contortions before a delighted crowd. The announcement in 1821, that a squad of Life Guardsmen had been engaged to show how the muscles were exercised when using the broadsword, drew to Somerset House twice as many people as the Great Room would hold. When it was full the doors were closed and guarded by constables from Bow Street, but the disappointed visitors invaded the Academy buildings and many of them climbed on to the roof of the Great Room and pushed their heads through the ventilating windows in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of the scene. The noise was so great that Carlisle's remarks could not be heard, and after a vain appeal for order by Sir Thomas Lawrence the Life Guardsmen were withdrawn and the proceedings brought summarily to a close.

On November 5th two vacant Associateships of the Royal Academy were filled, the first by the election of Charles Robert Leslie, who defeated George Clint by eleven votes to ten. In the second election Clint defeated the architect, Jeffry Wyatt (afterwards Wyatville) also by eleven votes to ten. The only other candidate supported was William Allan who received three votes. John Linnell was a candidate for the first time at this election. He put his name down by the advice of his friend Mulready, who was already an Academician. Mulready told him after the election that he had failed to succeed only by the narrowest margin, but this must have been said to save his feelings, for the Royal Academy Minutes show that no votes were given for Linnell. Even Mulready did not support him.

At a meeting of the Royal Academy Council soon after these elections, important changes were made in the remuneration of the figure models who sat in the Schools. When the Schools were

first opened in 1769 the female models were paid half a guinea a night. This was raised in 1811 to twelve shillings, and the pay of the male models from three shillings to five; in each case "exclusive of sixpence for refreshments". At the meeting of the Council in 1821 it was agreed further to increase the payment of females to a guinea and of males to half a guinea. The Academy usually treated its models well, and at this meeting of the Council eight guineas were voted to Eliza Osborne, "in distress", who had for some years posed at intervals in the Schools.

On December 10th, after the formal re-election of Lawrence as President of the Royal Academy, George Dance and Joseph Farington were appointed auditors for the coming year. Dance duly served, but Farington was never again to assist with his advice the institution of which he had been a member nearly forty years. His death, on December 30th, was caused by an accident when on a visit to his native Lancashire.

Joseph Farington, who was born in 1747, was the son of a country clergyman, and a pupil of Richard Wilson, of whom unfortunately he tells us little in his extensive memoirs. He exhibited for the first time in 1765 at the gallery of the Incorporated Society of Artists, of which body he became a member in 1769. He was one of the stewards at the Society's annual banquet in 1771. Although at that time the rivalry was most keen and the feeling most bitter between the Society and the newly-founded Royal Academy, Farington managed to maintain a connection with both institutions, for he had entered the Royal Academy Schools as a student three months before joining the Society. In 1783 he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1785, an Academician, but on what grounds it is impossible to guess. It is not known that he had any friends with influence, he was not rich, and apparently he was elected only on the strength of his exhibited paintings in oil, which are unnoticed by his contemporaries and barely mentioned—if indeed at all—in the newspaper criticisms published before 1785. How poor a painter he was at that time can be judged by his *Coast Scene*,

which is one of the weakest of the landscapes in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

Yet in the contest for the Associateship in 1783, he defeated Opie by fifteen votes to two, and only fifteen months—an exceptionally short period—elapsed before his promotion to the rank of Academician. This was on February 15th, 1785, when he was elected in the place of Wright of Derby, defeating among others Ozias Humphry, John Russell and William Hamilton, all of whom afterwards became Academicians.

Despite his poor professional qualifications Farington became a person of influence in the Royal Academy, and in connection with his activities Paul Sandby speaks of him in 1797, as “a man ever busy to form a party on his side”. Sandby was referring to the ridiculous scheme of the Venetian Secret, on which subject Farington in his *Diary* preserves a discreet silence. He appears to have been always scheming, but, it must be allowed, rather in the interests of his friends than of himself. It was owing to Farington’s illegal efforts to assist a friend that he was charged in 1805 with violating the interests of the Royal Academy and was severely censured at a General Assembly of the Academicians summoned to enquire into the matter.

But he was useful to the Academy as a capable man of business who spared no trouble in looking after its affairs, particularly in connection with its finances and charities. In dealing with the latter he generally leaned to the side of generosity, and the last motion he made at a meeting of the Council was a proposal that the poverty-stricken sister and housekeeper of the deceased Edward Edwards, A.R.A., should be allowed the pension of an Associate’s widow. Of Farington’s power Northcote speaks when referring to his own dislike to the Academicians generally. Northcote said he found them insufferably insolent, and the worst of them were those of the least pretensions. “How Farington used to rule the Academy! He was the great man to be looked up to on all occasions—all applicants must gain their point through him.” Northcote adds, scornfully, “But he was no painter. He cared nothing at all about pictures, his great

passion was the love of power". I quote this from Ward's record of his conversations with Northcote, and it would be interesting to know what Constable thought when he read it. For Constable had a high opinion of Farington's wisdom and judgment.

Constable's opinion was shared by Lawrence, who, if he had been guided in his business affairs by Farington, might have escaped from the financial embarrassments in which he was involved throughout his life. That Lawrence did consult Farington about his debts is shown by his correspondence, but there is nothing in the published memoirs or letters of either to support Allan Cunningham's surprising statement about the relative positions of the two painters in 1792. Lawrence was then twenty-three and Farington forty-five. Farington was a Royal Academician of seven years' standing, with a more than sufficient sense of his own importance, and, so far as is known, never in want of means. Yet Cunningham says that Lawrence in 1792 "made his friend Farington, who was not encumbered with commissions, his secretary, allowing him to draw twenty pounds a week for domestic outlay".

Farington was never identified with Haydon's quarrels with the Academy or the rejection of his pictures, yet he was an object of Haydon's detestation. Speaking once at a dinner given to him at Edinburgh, Haydon complained that people who have no talent but are carpers and intriguers always manage to work their way into corporate bodies such as the Royal Academy. He said:

I will give you an instance of a man I daresay you never knew—Farington, a man never heard of, the worst painter that ever was inflicted upon art. This man by intrigue, by artifice, and knowing how to take men at certain weak points, contrived to get such an influence that Reynolds, the first man who by his genius, manly integrity and independence raised the character of the profession, was obliged to succumb to him. He opposed Reynolds and Reynolds had to resign.

Haydon appears to have believed that Farington was chiefly instrumental in causing the resignation of Sir Joshua in 1790. Of this there is no proof, although it is known that Farington

voted against the President in the division about Bonomi's drawings. But a well-informed reviewer of Williams' Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence in the *New Monthly Magazine* of 1834 appears to have had the same idea. He says in commenting on the biographies of artists written by artists:

The Life of Sir Joshua by Farington was written under a compunctious visiting of nature, as an offering of retributive justice for the unprovoked conduct by which he had assailed the latter days of this great artist and amiable man.

It will always be a matter for regret that Farington did not write a memoir of his master, Richard Wilson, a task for which he was peculiarly qualified. It was known to Farington's contemporaries that he had gathered together a considerable amount of information concerning the artists of his time, and his friends urged him frequently, but always in vain, to hand down to posterity something about the man of whose life he knew so much and the public so little. In Farington's *Diary* the references to Wilson, though not infrequent, are slight; and he tells us nothing of the mysterious John Wilson, son of the landscape painter, who appealed to the Royal Academy for assistance in 1793 and 1796, and of whom there is no record except in the Academy Minutes. Yet Farington was a member of the Academy Council in 1796 when a grant of money was made to John Wilson. There is no record or tradition of Richard Wilson's marriage.

## CHAPTER II

1822

CONSTABLE's landscape of 1821 was not sold at the Royal Academy and was sent by him to the exhibition at the British Institution which was opened in January, 1822. So long as pictures remained in his possession Constable could never refrain from working on them, and after the close of the Academy he had retouched the landscape which had given so much pleasure to Charles Nodier. He had done it no good, in the opinion of the friendly critic of the *Examiner*. "We doubt", says that writer, "whether Mr Constable has improved No. 197, *Landscape—Noon*, by putting out certain catching lights, refractions of the sun's rays from the polished parts of vegetation, etc., but it still remains an extraordinary example of verisimilitude and rivalry to pastoral nature." The *Repository of Arts* notes it as a fine picture but thinks it would be finer still if its vigour, freshness and truth of effect were united to more neatness of execution. The *Sun* goes so far as to say that Constable's picture "stands pre-eminent" among the landscapes in the exhibition, but most of the newspaper critics passed it by without remark, although noticing and praising landscapes infinitely inferior.

At the election of Royal Academicians, held in February, while his picture was still on view at the British Institution, Constable was again unfortunate. Two seats were to be filled, those of Richard Cosway and John Yenn, the architect. The first contest was for Yenn's place and resulted in the election of Richard Cook, who defeated William Daniell by seventeen votes to eleven. In the preliminary contest only one vote was given to Constable. He was more successful in the struggle for Cosway's seat, as in the first voting he tied with Daniell, each having twelve votes. But in the final, Daniell, a landscape painter whose

name is forgotten to-day, defeated Constable easily, by seventeen votes to eleven.

Sir Frederick Eaton says in *The Royal Academy and its Members* that the election of William Daniell "will always remain one of the enigmas of the early days of the Institution", but it was less enigmatic in some respects than the election of Richard Cook whose name must be unfamiliar even to artists. Cook's election, or rather what followed it, was regarded as a scandal. He was a pupil of Robert Smirke, R.A., entered the Academy Schools on the same day as Constable, and exhibited a few pictures that were praised by contemporary critics. He was elected an Associate in 1816 and exhibited at the Academy for the last time in 1819. Yet he was made an Academician in 1822, and remained one, serving in his turn on the Council and Hanging Committees, until his death in 1857.

Cook's case was mentioned by George Clint when giving evidence in 1836 before the Parliamentary Committee on Arts and Principles of Design. Clint, who was elected an Associate in 1821, resigned in 1835, because he was tired of remaining in the lower rank and saw no chance of promotion. He thought he had been unfairly passed over, and said, as an example of the unfairness of the Academicians:

They have elected a Mr Richard Cook. In 1816 he was elected an Associate, he sent one picture after that in 1819... He was made a Royal Academician in 1822 and he has never exhibited a picture since. He is a young man in the full vigour of life, and though he does not exhibit he still finds it convenient to go to the meetings of the Academy, the private meetings, and take on him offices and receive the emoluments that are paid for them... It is keeping a nonentity in the Academy, and keeps out an effective person.

Anderdon says of Cook that "he was not without merit in the field of art, but, as some lady of fortune gave him her fair hand, he took the easy line, gave good dinners, and looked calmly at the battle of life. Mrs Cook is said to have thought it beneath her husband's dignity, as a rich man, to practice professionally". The impudent critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, when Cook was one of the Hanging Committee at the Academy in 1832, also said

that his wife would not let him paint any more. "We wish", said the writer, "that a few others we could name at the Academy had met with so sensible a wife." Cook, however, continued to paint for amusement. Thomas Uwins, R.A., writing from Italy in December, 1826, says: "Richard Cook is copying Tintoret with great energy at Venice; I never saw a man enter with more relish into the luxuries of Venetian art. He lives in Lord Byron's house [the Casa Moncenigo] and is waited on by the old servant of Lord Byron".

Cosway's large collection of drawings by Old Masters, prints and books, was sold by Stanley in February, and realized £1600. The Royal Academy sent to the sale a representative who bought for the Library of the institution prints to the value of £39. 10s. Mrs Cosway, who had an exalted opinion of her husband's talents and complained that he was "forgotten and undervalued in his own country", though still admired in Italy, arranged an exhibition of his works immediately after the sale of the Old Master drawings and prints. It was heralded by the following advertisement:

#### THE LATE RICHARD COSWAY, R.A.

The high reputation this gentleman acquired in various branches of the Art which he practised with such superior success has naturally excited an eager curiosity among all persons of taste to have an opportunity of viewing the admirable Works which were in his possession at his death.

MRS COSWAY, therefore, with a due regard to his memory, deems it her duty to afford the public at large a VIEW of a SELECTION which, in the opinion of the best judges have never been equalled in taste, beauty and variety by any individual at any period.

The COLLECTION consists of Sacred, Historical and Poetical Subjects, with some Portraits, which will be submitted to general inspection previous to her departure for Italy, at Mr Stanley's rooms, 21 Old Bond Street. Due notice will be given to the Public of the time of the Exhibition.

George IV, when Prince of Wales, had known Cosway and his wife intimately, and by His Majesty's desire a number of the drawings and paintings were sent to Brighton for his inspection before the opening of the exhibition, which took place early in

March. The exhibition was disappointing to Mrs Cosway, for it was not well attended, although she did all she could to attract visitors. The following letter shows how generous she was in issuing invitations. Rudolph Ackermann, to whom it was addressed, was the publisher and manufacturer of water colours. He was also the proprietor of the magazine, the *Repository of Arts*, in which a flattering notice of the Cosway exhibition afterwards appeared. Mrs Cosway says, writing from Edgware Road:

Friday, 8th March 1822

My dear Sir

I received your kind note and enclose tickets, but I am so ashamed to offer my friends a "shilling ticket" that I have made a list and given it to the man at the door—your name among them. You have only to give him your card every day of the Exhibition you please to go, but should you want more for your friends I will send them.

Mr Curtis spoke of your enquiries about Mr Stanley. I have always found him polite, attentive and *ready in payment*. His price is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. I went round and visited all the auctioneers, and really must say I liked him better than any! If you should like I should speak to him I will with pleasure. Next week I shall send you the case with the Albert Dürers. Still I say, if I could part with them I would willingly make some sacrifice to have done with them. I have kept the Albert Dürer Book, which I beg you will accept as a little memorial of friendship, tho' it is a trifle, as I know you will value it as a remembrance of the person who always esteemed you.

Your obliged

Maria Cosway.

P.S. I remove from this house on Monday, to 18 Duke Street, Manchester Square. Please to send for the book.

According to the following contemporary statement, which was evidently inspired, nothing in the Cosway exhibition was for sale "except the miniatures which were left on the hands of the departed artist, some in an unfinished state, and some from the caprice, or *economy*, of those who had ordered them. They consist of portraits of many distinguished characters of the day, male and female, and the relatives, it seems, feeling some sense of family pride, are gradually acquiring them". Mrs Cosway, no

doubt, hoped to shame the relatives of her husband's forgetful sitters into purchasing the miniatures, but most of them appear to have remained in her possession until 1828. She then sold, with the reserved portion of Cosway's collection of drawings by Old Masters, all his remaining works, including "numerous highly-finished miniatures, portraits of persons of rank and fashion". There must have been some wonderful bargains at this sale of 1828, remembering what high prices are given for Cosway's miniatures to-day.

In her letter to Ackermann Mrs Cosway speaks appreciatively of Stanley, at whose rooms the exhibition was held, and the stress she lays on his readiness to pay meant something at that time. From some auctioneers of a century ago and longer, it was difficult to obtain the proceeds of a sale until a considerable period had elapsed. The auctioneers pleaded, and perhaps justly, that they were obliged to give long credit to many of the dealers who were bidders. Stanley was a man eminent in his business, and many important pictures passed through his hands, including Gilbert Stuart's famous full-length of Washington, now in Lord Rosebery's collection. This he sold privately in 1826. Stanley was one of the earliest advocates of the opening of picture galleries and museums on Sundays.

Soon after the exhibition of her husband's work in 1822 Mrs Cosway returned to Italy, in which country she was born and educated, although of English parentage. But before leaving for the Continent she paid a visit to Scotland, apparently out of curiosity as she had no connections there, and in Edinburgh met Mrs Grant of Laggan, upon whom she made a most favourable impression. Mrs Grant says, writing to a friend on May 8th, 1822:

Of all the strangers I have seen of late none pleased me so much as Maria Cosway, who is going to reside in her native Italy, but came down to see Scotland before she takes farewell of Great Britain. She spent the last evening with me and greatly deepened the impression her character and manners had made on me before. Her opinions are so sound, and independent of the fashions of the world, and so superior to those of a mere artist; her dress too

and everything about her, so simple; the stamp of primitive goodness so well preserved with much intercourse with the world, and all her various talents made subservient to the love of God and her fellow-creatures. It does me good to meet such an unsophisticated being.

Maria Cosway was a woman of great charm and many accomplishments, and fitted to shine in society, as she did, but unsophisticated was the last word that should have been applied to her. She had seen life in many aspects, some of them curious, if eighteenth-century gossip can be trusted. But the gaiety and follies of that period were forgotten, and she was now, at sixty, to begin a new and useful phase of life at Lodi, near Milan, where she conducted a college for girls until her death which took place in the year 1838.

The members of the Hanging Committee for the exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1822 were Baily, Westmacott and Bone. This was a curious assortment, for Baily and Westmacott were sculptors and Bone an enamel painter. The bulk of the work they had to deal with was composed of oil paintings, yet the Committee included not a single painter in oil. Lawrence showed eight portraits, including those of the Countess of Blessington, the Duke of Wellington, and the King. Of the last-named work, painted for the gallery at Windsor, and more than flattering, Tom Moore has left us his opinion. After attending the Academy private view with Mrs Chantrey and Lady Dacre, Moore wrote in his *Diary*: "Lawrence's *Adonized* George the Fourth is disgraceful both to the King and to the painter".

Turner, who sent nothing to the exhibition of 1821, contributed only one picture in 1822. The temporary neglect of the Academy is probably explained by this announcement, made in the *Repository of Arts* in May: "Mr Turner has rebuilt and newly arranged his private gallery and opened it to the public inspection. Some of the best of his pictures can now be seen there". The writer recommends his readers to visit the gallery but says nothing, unfortunately, about the pictures on view. Turner's contribution to the exhibition at the Academy, *What you will* (114), was not much to the taste of most of the critics. The only

complimentary notice of it that I have seen appeared in the *Observer*, which, coupling Turner with Callcott who also showed only one work, says that in both cases the pictures are gems, "to use the phrase among artists". The *Literary Gazette*, after scoffing at the title, says of *What you will*: "It is a garden-scene and nothing else, a sketch and no more. It is a pretty bit of colouring, something in the style of Watteau". To the *Examiner* it was "only a piece of coloured canvas, almost anything but what a picture ought to be"; and the *Repository of Arts* laments that "this whimsical attempt at Watteau" should have been produced by a man of such originality and power as Turner. The most severe review was in the *New Monthly Magazine*: "By Turner we have nothing at all—or rather we have worse than nothing, for he cannot mean to call No. 114 a picture. It is a scrap of spoilt canvas, at once a libel on his great name and an affront to the public taste".

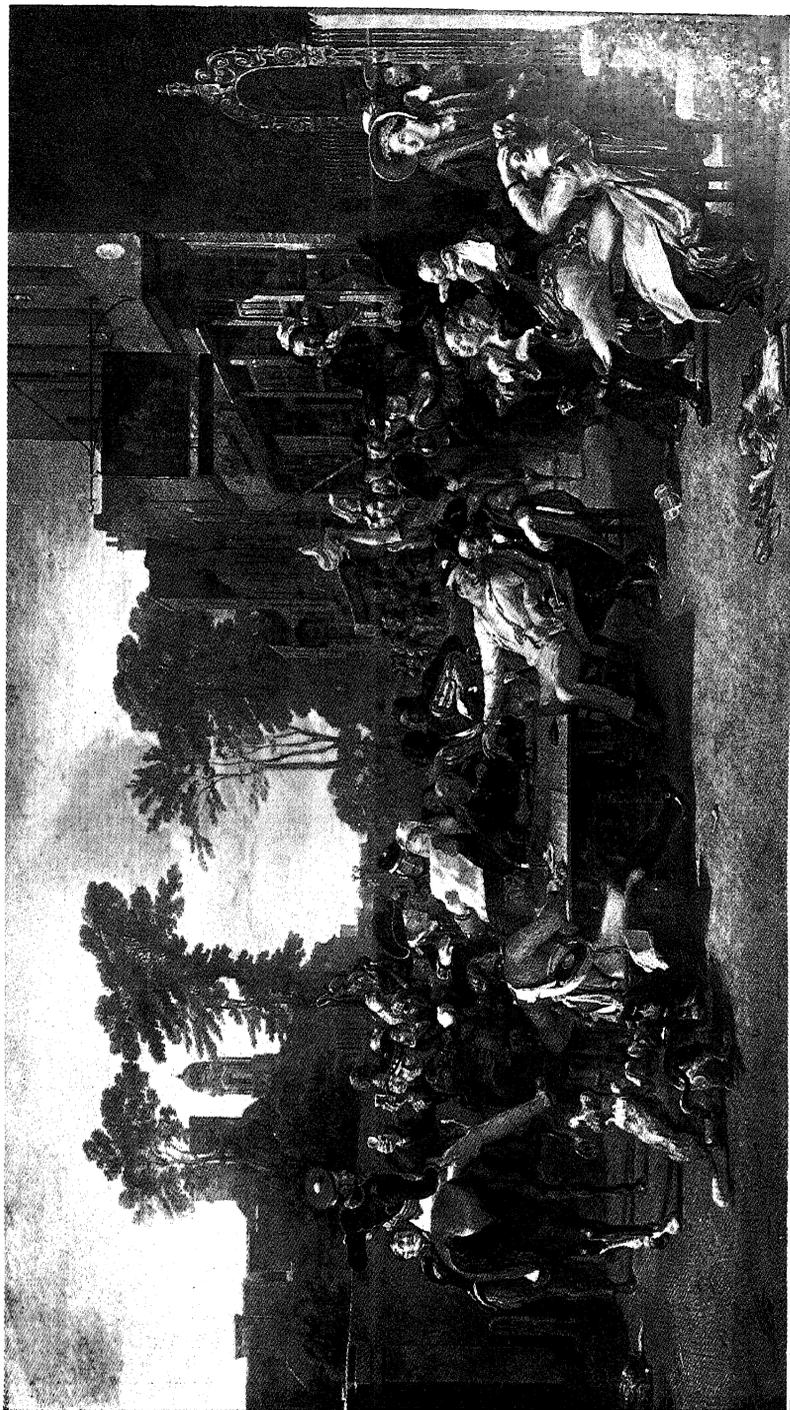
All the critics admired Callcott's coast-scene in misty weather, *Smugglers* (171), and Collins was praised, especially for *A Scene near Chichester* (33), and *Woodcutters, Buckland* (89). Constable, too, had friends, but their praise was frequently accompanied by criticism. Two or three writers complain of his want of variety and sameness of subject, and the *Museum*, while admitting that his *View on the Stour, near Dedham* (183) is almost, if not quite, the best landscape in the exhibition, thinks that Constable's execution wants breadth, and describes his *View from the Terrace, Hampstead* (295) as cold and raw. But the critic of the *Examiner*, who always liked Constable's work, finds in his *View on the Stour* "the consoling recollection of the charm of nature" amid the surrounding glare of gold frames and gaudy colour.

In noticing the landscapes at the Academy, the critic of the *Museum* makes an interesting reference to the Rev. Richard Hume Lancaster, who was among the honorary exhibitors. "His pencil", says the critic, "we are pleased to recognize, since it brings to our recollection the Grove of Merton College, where more than twenty years ago Mr Lancaster's skill in landscape-painting procured him the sobriquet of Salvator Rosa." Hume

Lancaster, two of whose pictures are in the National Gallery, was probably the most accomplished amateur of his time. Hazlitt noticed and praised two landscapes exhibited by him at the British Institution in 1814. He should not be confounded with another Hume Lancaster, a painter who was for many years a member of the Society of British Artists.

There remains to be mentioned at the Academy "the picture of the year"—to use a modern expression—Wilkie's *Chelsea Pensioners receiving the Gazette announcing the Battle of Waterloo*, the most popular work ever exhibited at the Royal Academy. Wellington had been the national hero since Waterloo; it was known that he had commissioned Wilkie to paint the picture for what was believed to be an extravagant price, and the subject was one to touch the heart of the public and flatter the national pride. Preliminary descriptions, one of them four columns in length, appeared in some of the newspapers, and the people of Kensington, where the picture was painted, approached the artist and begged for the privilege of a private view. The favour was granted, and on the day before the great canvas was despatched to Somerset House, the painter's dwelling was overrun by between three and four hundred of his neighbours. "My house has been like a fair," said Wilkie, in a letter to Raimbach the engraver.

Among the visitors was Wilkie's neighbour, the Rev. T. F. Dibdin, the bibliographer, who saw the picture again at the Academy on the first day of the exhibition. It was hung on the centre of the best wall, above the fireplace. "The pressure to see it", he says, "was prodigious, and the picture being placed on a level with the eye, everybody chose to exercise the *nose* also. Meanwhile rims of bonnets were rubbed over the surface of the painting, which was soon likely to be killed with overmuch caressing." Dibdin hastened to warn Wilkie, who applied in vain to Howard, the Academy Secretary, for protection to be given to his work. Wilkie went again to the Academy on the following day, and, he says: "I was witness to such a scene in front of my picture as convinced me that it was in imminent



*From the engraving by John Burnet*

CHELSEA PENSIONERS READING THE GAZETTE OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

By Sir David Wilkie, R.A.



danger". He then wrote to the President, Sir Thomas Lawrence, in the strongest terms, demanding, not as a favour but as a right, that a railing should be put up. This was done on the following morning. The railing was of brass and semicircular, and behind it a crowd stood before the picture from morning till night. Some of the visitors lingered indefinitely, a practice against which the *Literary Gazette* entered this protest:

The occupation of stations by the hour, in front of favourite pieces, is hardly fair in an exhibition crowded with visitors; and especially when ladies get their poke-bonnets within the frames. The pictures are endangered and all vista shut out. We recommend that on future occasions the pictures of Wilkie may be hung near the ground, there will then be a chance of seeing them. Let the first rank kneel, the second stoop, and the third will only have to cast their eyes down.

In spite of its popularity Wilkie's picture did not escape criticism. He had taken infinite pains with the background, with the intention of reproducing exactly the outline and details of Chelsea Hospital and the other buildings introduced. Yet the *Guardian* found in the picture, "such a want of nature and truth that no one without the help of the catalogue could discover that the foreground was Chelsea Road and the background Chelsea Hospital". The *Morning Herald* thought the *Pensioners* inferior to several preceding works by the artist, who had repeated himself. Some of the figures introduced into the earlier works were now re-introduced, in the same actions and employments, and with the same expressions. One of the figures objected to by the *Morning Herald* was that of the oyster-woman, whose introduction was certainly unfortunate. Oysters are not sold in London at the end of June!

Wilkie was saved from a worse error by a contemporary collector of pictures, Mr James Wadmore, who saw the *Pensioners* while it was in progress and noticed that the cavalryman who had brought the *Gazette* to Chelsea was a Life Guard. "But, Mr Wilkie," he protested, "the Life Guards were at the battle!" Wilkie tried to excuse himself by saying that some of them might have been left at home to recruit, but after thinking the matter

over, decided to substitute a Lancer for the Life Guardsman. Mr Wadmore, who had tried in vain to obtain a picture by Wilkie, asked that he might have the original study for the Life Guardsman, and the artist, after the price of £40 had been agreed upon, promised to send it home. It arrived a few days afterwards, but it was no longer an unfinished sketch. It was now complete. Another figure had been added to it, as well as that of a dog, "to break the lines of the horse's legs", the artist said. Mr Wadmore wanted to add to the price, as it was now a picture, not a sketch. But Wilkie refused to hear of it, saying, "It was all contemplated at the time".

It is not generally known that Wilkie, while engaged upon the picture for the Duke of Wellington, made the acquaintance of one of the Duke's most famous adversaries, Marshal Soult. In the autumn of 1821, when the *Pensioners* was well advanced, Wilkie took a holiday, part of which he spent in Paris, where he saw all the pictures he could. He was told of a collection of Spanish works in the possession of Marshal Soult, and was advised to write for permission to see them. "This", he says, "I did, and had a note from the Marshal fixing a day when I might do so. When I went, to my surprise, I was introduced to the Duke of Dalmatia himself." Wilkie's account of his interview with the great soldier is interesting. It may be remarked that in the opinion of some of his friends Wilkie's French was execrable. He says of Soult's famous collection:

The pictures were the finest of those of Murillo, and were larger than any I had ever seen of the Master. I was exceedingly pleased and gratified by them, but was no less interested by this sort of opportunity of meeting so distinguished a man as Soult. His manner and tone were exceedingly good-humoured, and when he spoke to me even familiar. I was nearly two hours in his hotel, during which time he was always by, particularly when I came to the leading pictures. He would explain them himself and would lead me by the arm to look at another picture, and though there were people by who could interpret, he appeared to prefer hearing me explain what I thought of the pictures as well as I could. This was perhaps the most interesting scene I was present at in Paris. Soult is a strong and powerful man, looks sensible and shrewd, and quite the person to whom the command of an army might

be delegated. He does not, however, look much like a soldier, and certainly does not carry himself high in his manner. But with all this, there was now and then an expression he made use of, and there was a deference shown by those about him that kept me in mind, all along, that I was in the presence of the great opponent of Wellington.

Owing largely to the attraction of Wilkie's picture the receipts from the exhibition at the Royal Academy were nearly £6000, larger by far than in any preceding year in the history of the institution. But while things were so prosperous financially there were discords of a serious nature in the Academy itself. Wilkie, after referring to the close of the exhibition in a letter to his friend Perry Nursey, says:

The meeting which took place on the Monday after, as I fully expected, was by no means satisfactory; it was what the expression of personal grievances on the one side without anything conciliatory on the other, was likely to create, i.e., an increase of soreness to both. Whether anything may be done previously to heal matters up, no one knows, but I fear much, though now at the highest point of prosperity in our institution, that next spring various of our members may secede from the Exhibition.

The troubles at the Academy appear to have been dissipated during the next few months for there were no seceders, none at least important enough to cause remark, from the exhibition of 1823. It is curious that although the troubles appear to have been grave, there is no reference to them in the Minutes of the Royal Academy.

The Minutes, however, record several other events of interest that occurred during the year. One of them, in connection with the charitable fund, is worth mentioning. The applicants for assistance from the fund were in most cases artists of no great importance who had fallen upon evil days, or their widows or orphans, but on June 28th an appeal was made on behalf of William Blake. The following is the entry in the Minutes concerning it: "Read a letter from Mr Collins, R.A., signed also by Mr Abraham Cooper, R.A., recommending to the charitable consideration of the Council Mr William Blake, an able designer and engraver, labouring under great distress". A proposal was

made by Baily and seconded by Bone that £25 should be given. This was the only application made to the Academy on Blake's behalf.

Later in the year, Carpue, the eminent surgeon and lecturer on surgery, requested that a cast of an extraordinary kind, then in the Academy Schools, should be given up to him and placed in his private museum. The cast was one of a crucified figure made in 1801, as an attempt to show the appearance of the body of a man in the transition from life to death upon the cross. In pictures of the Crucifixion the figure had been painted, in some instances from living models and in others from dead bodies, and for this reason were untruthful in the opinion of the artists, Benjamin West, Richard Cosway, and Thomas Banks, for whom the cast was obtained in 1801. They believed that a nearer approximation to the correct action of a crucified figure could be obtained by attaching to a cross a body from which the warmth of life had not yet departed. With a view to testing this, they approached Carpue, who received the suggestion with enthusiasm. He applied to the Surgeon-General to the Forces, who arranged that the body of James Legg, a Chelsea pensioner who had been sentenced to death for the murder of a comrade, should be handed over to Carpue to be fastened on a cross the moment it was taken down from the gallows. This was done, and a cast from the body, prepared with great skill by Banks, was deposited in the Royal Academy Schools. The Council, after some deliberation, granted Carpue's request and the cast was removed from the Schools to his museum.

The Academicians, who had purchased the copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper* in 1821, were this year offered an altar-piece from the ruined Abbey of St Bertin, near St Omer, illustrating the life of St Bertin, and said to be by Memling. The altar-piece, which was declined, was offered to the Academy by Louis Francia, a French artist who lived for many years in England.

Although since 1817 lighting by gas had been introduced into the galleries at Somerset House, candles were still in use in the Schools, the rules of which enjoined that: "Each Student, while

he is drawing or modelling, shall keep his candle covered by the bell, and when he has done shall carefully extinguish it". The students were numerous, but nevertheless the bill for candles passed by the Council and recorded in the Minutes this year seems inordinately large. It amounted to no less than £131. 8s. 8d., but it may have been running for some time, as the gas bill, of £133, paid on the same occasion by the Council, covered the years 1819, 1820 and 1821. Evidently in 1822 gas companies dealt more considerately with their customers than they do to-day.

On November 4th three Associates of the Royal Academy were elected. The first chosen was Jeffry Wyatt (Wyatville), the architect, who defeated H. W. Pickersgill by seventeen votes to six. Pickersgill was again defeated by George Jones, in the second election, by fifteen votes to eight; but was successful in the third, in which he obtained fourteen votes against nine for J. J. Chalon. It was of this election that Constable wrote: "Three Associates are to be chosen next Tuesday at the Royal Academy, out of forty candidates. They are at a loss entirely. There is not an artist among them". Constable's contemptuous remark is hardly fair to Etty who on this occasion was for the first time a candidate.

The question of the foundation of a National Gallery, the need for which had been urged upon the Government for many years by the newspapers, was revived late in the autumn by a remarkable paragraph in *The Times*, printed in the middle of the first page of news. This paragraph, published on October 29th, held out hopes of the early establishment of a Gallery in many ways well equipped. According to *The Times*:

The King, it is said, has expressed a wish that a national museum should be erected for works of art to which the public should have free access. His Majesty has promised to contribute the private collection at Carlton Palace, besides a selection from the Palaces of Kensington, Hampton Court and Windsor; these together will make a noble collection. The King's individual taste inclines to the Flemish and Dutch schools of painting, and the specimens of the masters of those schools which adorn the walls at Carlton Palace are of the very choicest kind. The late King was fonder of the more poetical and

higher departments of art, and the Windsor collection accordingly abounds in the works of Raphael, Titian, Parmigiano, the two Poussins, Lorraine, etc. His Majesty's wish is worthy of the nation and we sincerely hope that Parliament will lend its aid in furtherance of so splendid a design. Advocates as we are for a sparing expenditure we should not grudge the funds for such an object, provided always that none but men of acknowledged taste and skill in arts should have the disposal of the money.

It is difficult to believe that so circumstantial a statement could be entirely groundless, published as it was in London's principal journal. But nothing more was said of it, and this latest and noblest of plans for a National Gallery was shelved with the rest. The foundation of such an institution was, however, much nearer at hand than seemed possible at the close of 1822.

## CHAPTER III

1823

THE famous portrait of Susanne Fourment by Rubens, known as the *Chapeau de Paille*, was sold by auction at Antwerp in July, 1822. The sale of the picture, advertised in all the great cities of Europe, attracted many visitors to Antwerp, who saw the *Chapeau de Paille* knocked down, amid great excitement, for £3190, to Nieuwenhuys the picture-dealer, who bought it in conjunction with two Englishmen, Foster and Smith. It was soon afterwards brought to London, where, according to a curious story in circulation in the autumn, it was passionately admired by George IV. The *Literary Chronicle* said of the picture in November, 1822:

It was announced a few weeks back that this celebrated portrait of Rubens' mistress had been purchased by Mr Smith, the picture-dealer of Great Marlborough Street, and would be exhibited in the course of the ensuing spring. We are now enabled to state that shortly after the arrival of the painting in this country, it was, by the desire of the King, sent to Carlton House, where it remained for several days, locked up in a private apartment of which his Majesty himself, during that period, kept the key. Even some of the most favoured were, we believe, excluded from a sight of this beautiful specimen of art. In the meantime our gracious sovereign became enamoured of the picture, and Sir T. Lawrence having been consulted as to its value, we are informed that it has been purchased by His Majesty for the sum of £7000. A profit is thus realized by Mr Smith, we believe, of nearly £4000, besides the sum which he expects to derive from exhibiting the picture during the coming season, according to a stipulation made with the King to that effect.

No doubt the *Chapeau de Paille* was shown to the King, whose admiration for Flemish art was well known, and it is likely that His Majesty admired the picture. But he did not buy it. It remained in the hands of Smith and his partners, who made much profit from the exhibition of the picture at Stanley's rooms in Old

Bond Street. Half-a-crown was at first charged for admission. "It is daily visited by vast numbers", said the *Morning Post* on March 21st, and the visitors during the season numbered tens of thousands. No one was permitted to approach the picture too nearly, or to make the slightest sketch of it. However, when Haydon went to see it, with John Martin, they were allowed as a favour to go inside the barrier. "Both artists", says Haydon's pupil, William Bewick, who was present, "viewed it closely, admiring its solidity, its transparency, and its purity of tint, without uttering one word. They did not seem to breathe. At length Haydon said to me, 'There Bewick, take your fill of that. It's a complete lesson to any painter'." Haydon, nevertheless, ventured to criticize the masterpiece, as did some of the newspapers. The critic of *The Times* thought that the lower portion of the picture, including the hands, was not by Rubens. The colouring of that part appeared to him opaque and dirty, with no affinity to that of the face and neck.

The absurdity of calling Rubens' picture *Chapeau de Paille* when the hat of the girl is of felt, not of straw, was as obvious, of course, in 1823 as it is now. The title was much discussed and an attempt to account for it was published in *The Times* on March 21st, soon after the opening of the exhibition at Stanley's rooms. The editor says:

A correspondent has favoured us with the following explanation of the name of this celebrated painting, so remarkably at variance with what is represented. "The original name", he says, "was *Span'sh Huth*, which means in Flemish, Spanish hat; but *Span Huth* in the same language means straw hat. The picture was so much known and talked about by Flemish of all classes that the above corruption was the consequence, probably through persons who had never seen it. The French are the cause of the misnomer by translating it *Chapeau de Paille*, by which name it is and probably always will be, known by all admirers of the art."

This famous portrait remained on view at Stanley's rooms for three or four months, and was then purchased by Sir Robert Peel. It was bought by the Government for the National Gallery in 1871 with many other pictures from the Peel collection.

When Haydon went to see the *Chapeau de Paille* he had just opened an exhibition of his own at the Egyptian Hall, where he showed his large picture *The Raising of Lazarus*. The *Observer* gave it a notice, two and a half columns in length, accompanied by what was a novelty for the time in a weekly newspaper, a small but by no means bad, engraving of the picture.

*The Times* also made a new departure, and an important one, in 1823. For many years the references to art in its columns had been desultory, and the Royal Academy exhibitions in particular had been neglected in a marked manner, so marked indeed that *The Times* more than once made a kind of apology, pleading that it was want of space only that prevented it from noticing the pictures at Somerset House. All this was now to be altered, and the announcement of a change of policy was made on January 15th at the top of a column headed "The Fine Arts". The following was the announcement:

Feeling it to be our duty as daily publishers to catch the living manners as they rise, and as everything that tends either to the use, instruction or amusement of our numerous readers is important, we intend visiting all the Public Exhibitions of Art that are likely to interest the public this season, and to offer such observations on their management, the subjects they exhibit, the merits of the artists, and the tendency they have of improving the British School of Painting, Drawing, Sculpture and Engraving, as occurs to us; in doing which we will most liberally praise the praiseworthy, but we cannot give up the privilege of using the rod.

*The Times* gave notices of most of the London exhibitions during the year, including that of the Royal Academy, and published three long unsigned articles, on April 3rd, October 18th, and October 20th, on the pictures in the Hermitage Gallery at St Petersburg.

At the Royal Academy, Constable, who had been within a single vote of election as an Academician in 1822, lost ground this year in a contest for a seat made vacant by the death of his old friend Joseph Farington. The election, held in February, according to the custom then and for many years afterwards, resulted in the return of Ramsay Richard Reinagle, who de-

feated Jeffry Wyatt (Wyatville) in the ballot by fifteen votes to thirteen. In the preliminary voting Constable had only three supporters. That Reinagle should have defeated Constable in this election is astonishing. Certainly Reinagle's father was an Academician, but he was a man of no account among the Forty, whose work was never noticed, and who was involved, as his son was, with picture-dealing and restoring. Ramsay Richard Reinagle was about the same age as Constable and they had been associated when young.

They became acquainted about 1798-1800, when Constable first went to London to study, and no doubt, Reinagle, brought up in a family of painters, was then the more skilful craftsman of the two. But there is no reason to accept Reinagle's assertion that he helped Constable in his work—an assertion, it should be observed, that was not made until long after the landscape painter's death. It was made in a letter published in the *Literary Gazette* in 1850. "The late Mr Constable," said Reinagle, "a pupil of mine, exhibited a landscape in the large room at Somerset House, in which I painted a group of cattle, showing the breath steaming from their mouths. I did them with a palette knife to imitate his manner and he kindly fathered them." Reinagle at the time he wrote this letter was no longer a member of the Royal Academy. He had been compelled to retire a year earlier for exhibiting as his own a picture he had not painted.

On April 23rd the Royal Academy lost in Nollekens the oldest and wealthiest, and probably the least educated of its members. His notorious illiteracy is remarked in J. T. Smith's amusing, but spiteful and not too accurate, memoir of the sculptor, *Nollekens and his Times*. It has been thought that Smith, who gives a long list of surprising examples of bad spelling, intentionally exaggerated the orthographical weakness of Nollekens. But nothing can be worse than his spelling in a letter written from Rome to a fellow student about 1769. This letter, addressed to "Mr Thomas Banks, Sculptor, at Mr Hayward's, Piccadilly, London", was published after the death of Nollekens, with the names of three persons struck out, as in the following copy:

Rome

My worthy friend Banks.

I take the opportunity of sending you these few lines by a Friend of mine going to England. You must excuse the time it will be on the Road, which I fear will be a long while, hope it will find you, your Mother and Brothers and all Friends in Good health, as I am at present but have bin for some time much out of Order with the Ague and Feever, I belive on account of the wery Bad wether which as lasted here a long while and has bin much the complaint about Rome. don't dout that you have heard of my saif ariving this side of the Alps a long time sience in the first I was at Paris saw every thing in its Greatest Luster Lions Turinne Millan. Padwa Venise. Bologna. florence, where at the Grand duke of Tuscanny's Gallery a mongue many other most sepriseing Curioistis I saw the Gretion Venis in perfect Blossom with several others to long here to mentian—and last at the spot where Romulus and Remus took Suck; of the She-Wolf. and afterwards Gave it the name it Bears to this Day. where there is Every thing an artist can wish for to study from—the Laocoon the Torso that Michel Angello so much admired. the Apollo. the works in the Vatican of the Divine Raphil, the Hercules at the farnaise St Peters and I promis you Several Other wery Wonderful fine things to see.

I hope you have met with Scuccess for your Basso relivo and beg you will let me know how the rest of the Prize fighters gose on. who gites the most honour amongue them who as got the prize this Year for the figure and who as made the Great Show at the exibittion.. beg my compliments to my friend Mr . . . . hope he and all his family is well and beg when you write to have a line or two from him. and let it be soon the Expensis is but small.

I expect within a few month to have the Like Ocation of writing to you by Mr . . . . who is Going to England to try his fortune, which I believe he will Soon make. beg my complements to my O friend Signore . . . . and to all others who are So kind to Ask after me. in the meantime Subscribe my Self

Yours with Sincerity

J. Nollekens.

P.S. There is F . . . . H . . . . at Florence who is knocking the Marbil about like Fewry and belive he as got more work to do than any One Sculptor in England. There is in Rome Some few Panters who are Like to make a wery Great Shoe in a few Years in England in the History way.

Stothard, William Daniell, and Westall were the hangers of the Royal Academy exhibition this year. Bigg should have served on the Committee but was indisposed and Westall took his place. The sculpture was arranged by Westmacott and Baily.

Five days were allotted to members of the Royal Academy to work on or varnish their pictures, but none to non-members, by whom the excessive privileges of the Academicians were deeply resented. No consideration was paid to the newspaper critics at this time, or for many years afterwards. But they appear to have been satisfied to push in with the mob and to gather their notes as well as they could. The representative of *The Times* remarked that on the opening day: "The fineness of the weather had attracted an immense multitude of people to see the pictures, and the crowd was so excessive that it was with great difficulty we could succeed in getting a peep at some of the principal stars of the exhibition". But he makes no complaint of this.

Turner, who had shown nothing of particular interest in 1821 and 1822, was represented this year by a work of importance that was in many ways a new departure. This was *The Bay of Baiae, with Apollo and the Sibyl* (77), a picture which Ruskin has described as encumbered with material and crude in colour. When shown at the Academy it was the subject of much controversy. "In his landscape *The Bay of Baiae*," said the *Morning Post*, "Mr Turner has excelled himself. It is truly the effect of the sunshine, and not of sunshine only but of that intense sunshine of the East which gives a vivid splendour to the colours of all objects." The picture was equally admired by the critic of the *European Magazine*, who said of it:

A gorgeous painter's vision! We were much annoyed by a cold-blooded critic, standing near us while we were admiring this dazzling and magnificent picture, who observed that it was "not natural". Not natural! No, not in his limited and purblind view of nature. But perfectly natural to the man who is capable of appreciating the value of a poetic concentration of all that nature occasionally and partially discloses of the rich, the glowing and the splendid.

The "purblind critic" referred to in this note of appreciation may have been the representative of either of two rival journals, the *Monthly Magazine* and the *New Monthly Magazine*, for both found serious fault with *The Bay of Baiae*. It was, in the opinion of the last-mentioned journal:

A most meretricious performance, displaying infinite skill in the handling, but a most perverse (for we cannot think it yet as a perverted) taste in the colouring and general effect, as well as in the treatment of the mythological figures introduced. The latter are as bad as Mr Martin himself could have made them, and the picture, if it did not have Turner's deservedly great name, might be mistaken for an early work of the former artist.

The *Monthly Magazine* said of the picture :

Turner has a fine poetical scene but it is so outrageous in colour as even to eclipse all his former extravagancies. These visionary absurdities are upon a par with much of the music and poetry of the day; affectation and refinement run mad. Constable's fresh and powerful transcripts from nature are convincing proofs of her superiority to the sophistications of art.

Constable's principal contribution to the exhibition was the *Salisbury Cathedral* (59), now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was generally praised, although one critic described it as mannered in treatment, and complained that in his other landscapes the foliage was always the same. "Beautiful as it is," he says, "variety would be more agreeable."

The principal picture shown by Wilkie was that admirable piece of characterization, *The Parish Beadle* (135), in which the portly and consequential official might well be a representation of Mr Bumble himself. It is, according to Wilkie's neighbour, Dibdin, a portrait "to the very life" of the senior Beadle of the artist's parish of Kensington. The *Literary Gazette*, while admiring the picture generally, lamented that Wilkie was drifting away from his old colouring, and the old English feeling of his earlier days. It attributed the low tone of *The Parish Beadle* to the influence of Rembrandt. The tone was the subject of much criticism, and Constable, although he admired the picture immensely, thought it was too black. It was in fact the first evidence of Wilkie's change in style, to the more sombre colour and heavy shadows that distinguish his later works, in which, unfortunately for their permanency, he made too frequent use of the fascinating but dangerous asphaltum. He expresses his admiration for asphaltum in some letters, written when he was finishing *The Parish Beadle*, and addressed to his friend, Perry Nursey, who

was an amateur painter. The "Brown" he mentions was a well-known artists' colourman in Holborn. Wilkie says, writing on January 20th, 1823:

I have desired Brown to send you a pot of asphaltum, this you are to use by mixing a portion with a palette knife with an equal portion of drying oil and a little japanner's gold size—all three well mix together, then add to it, a portion of mastic varnish nearly equal to the whole, and mix them rapidly. This will make the finest jelly and is the only way in which asphaltum can be used.

Writing again on February 27th, he says:

I am happy to find you have got all the things that were sent. The colours you mention are what I ordered, not from any directions in your letter (for I think there was none) but from what I require when I paint myself, and nearly in the same proportions. Those you wish in addition I can, however, get for you, such as light ochre and cobalt, the latter of which I think you would prefer to smalt. The pot of asphaltum, if you can get it mixed in such a way as not to run, will give a fine, rich surface to what you do. It is the most gorgeous of all colours.

There were some interesting sales this year, and it is curious that in three of them marble busts of Pope figured, two by Roubiliac and the other a copy of an original by him. The copy, by Nollekens, was in the sale of that sculptor's work; the originals were in the Garrick and Watson Taylor collections. The last-named version was bought by Watson Taylor at a sale of a collection of works of art formed by Mr James Bindley, who had acquired it many years before, for £40, from the collection of Joseph Brown of Shepton Mallet. At the sale of Alexander Davison's pictures, one of two large works by Copley failed to elicit a single bid, and was withdrawn. The other, the well-known *Death of Lord Chatham*, was bought for a thousand guineas by Lord Liverpool.

The sale of George Watson Taylor's collection was the most important of those mentioned above, and caused as much stir as the Thomond sale of two years earlier. "It is long", said the *Literary Chronicle*, "since we remember a sale attended by so distinguished a class of the nobility of the land, as well as artists and amateurs. The crowd each day was so great that Mr Christie

was obliged to station a person near the door of the auction room, to repeat the bids from the noblemen and gentlemen at the further end of the room and on the stairs, which their extreme distance rendered it impossible for the auctioneer to hear." The highest prices realized were for Parmigiano's *Vision of St Jerome*, and the famous "Rainbow" landscape of Rubens, but for the majority of those present at the sale the interest centred in Sir Joshua's full-length of Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse, for which a price was paid—£1837. 10s.—that was unprecedented for a portrait.

The correspondent of the *Museum* says, after mentioning the amount:

But no sum can give a correct notion of the interest, and even breathless anxiety, excited by the disposal of the last picture in the first day's sale—Mrs Siddons in the character of the Tragic Muse by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Mr Christie had properly anticipated such a feeling. There was a general and a sort of systematic silence when he took up his speech, as the assistant's long and paper-capped pole was pointed to, and at length rested on, the transcendant example of the talents of Reynolds, indubitably the first picture of his pencil in this country. Mr Christie addressed the audience in a speech at once ready, apt and convincing. The manner in which he knocked it down to its noble purchaser, Lord Grosvenor, was at once felicitous and effective.

Sir Joshua's portrait of Mrs Siddons remained in the possession of Lord Grosvenor and his descendants for nearly a hundred years. In 1919 it was once more sent to Christie's, by the Duke of Westminster, and was put up for sale in conditions as exciting as those of 1823. Men and women waited in a crowd outside the sale-room for an hour or more before the advertised time, and as soon as the doors were opened, rushed for the seats as if they were entering the pit of a theatre. The appeal for a bid for the *Tragic Muse* made by Mr Hannen, the senior partner of Christie's, was answered by one of five thousand guineas. The next was ten thousand, but after sixteen thousand had been reached there was a halt and the auctioneer looked about him for a minute or two waiting in vain for a bid. It came at last and was followed by others without cessation until fifty-two thousand guineas was reached. This was less than the reserve and the picture was

bought in. The Duke of Westminster afterwards sold it privately and it passed into the collection of Mr H. E. Huntington, of California.

Mr Hannen in 1919 offered the famous Sir Joshua from the same rostrum (made by Chippendale) as that in which James Christie the second stood, when he sold the picture in 1823. But "the long and paper-capped pole" of that period has long ceased to figure at the auctions, and perhaps was never used after the Watson Taylor sale, for this was the last sale of the first importance held in the rooms in Pall Mall which the Christies had occupied for more than fifty years. A new era commenced for the firm in 1823, for in that year possession was taken of the premises in King Street in which the sales have since been held.

The premises in Pall Mall occupied by Christie's, consisted of two houses adjoining Schomberg House, that ancient mansion in which Gainsborough, Cosway, and other artists had lived at different times. The original doorways of the two houses remained, but were supplemented by another door in the centre of the block, which opened on to a wide passage or hall leading to the auction-room. This room was built over the garden, which adjoined the grounds of Marlborough House. The auction-room, forty-six feet by forty, and lighted from the top, was built by the first James Christie in 1768, in conjunction with the Free Society of Artists, whose Council advised him as to its plan and rented it for several seasons as their exhibition room. In this room, on July 14th, 1823, James Christie the second, after disposing of the collection of the ex-Queen of Naples, made known the intended removal of the firm to King Street. The *Morning Chronicle* says, in recording this speech:

At the end of the day's sale Mr Christie addressed the company and announced that his labours in this room were now closed for ever. During the last twenty years this gallery, under his direction, had been devoted to Literature and the Arts, but his lease having expired, and the Government wishing to add the premises to the Office of Ordnance, it would hereafter be devoted to the Art of War. Mr Christie said that for the future conduct of his business, he had engaged those extensive rooms known as the European Museum in King Street, St James's Square, and he flattered himself that by

the aid of a skilful architect he had employed, they would be rendered better calculated for the advantageous exhibition of pictures, and for all general purposes, than the place he now occupied. During this address to his auditory Mr Christie appeared to be deeply affected. The manner in which it was received by all present must have been very flattering to him.

James Christie's remarks upon the alterations then in progress at the new premises suggest that they had been some time in his possession, and it is not unlikely that he was the purchaser of the lease of the European Museum, when it was sold by auction, on January 12th, 1822.

The auctioneer was his father's former clerk, Harry Phillips, who had built up a prosperous business of his own at No. 73 New Bond Street, where it is still conducted under the title of Messrs Phillips, Son and Neale. The attitude of Phillips in the rostrum was less dignified than that of James Christie the second, but perhaps not less effective. An amusing note on Phillips as a salesman was written in 1831 by the art critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, who said:

It is perfectly delightful to see Mr Phillips play the *aimable*—to see him knock down a picture, and with extended hand, say:—"It is yours, Sir, I congratulate you, I give you joy"—which he does with all the gracious action of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, though as little like a ghost as a tub of butter.

In July the Royal Academy lost one of its most distinguished members in the person of Henry Raeburn, whose reputation had increased in London, year by year, since he began to exhibit regularly at Somerset House. He had been a member of the Royal Academy for eight years, and owed his election entirely to his merit, for he declined to follow the objectionable custom then prevailing of soliciting the Academicians personally for their votes.

Raeburn is an artist of whose life, professional or private, we know comparatively little, and this is the more remarkable because he was in no sense a recluse. He lived in Edinburgh as Reynolds had lived in London, in the full light of day. Edinburgh was then a city not too large for all the people of importance to know each other, and one in which, moreover, literary men abounded. Of the intimacy of the artistic and literary society of

the Scottish capital two or three years before Raeburn's death, Haydon gives us some idea in an entry made in his *Diary* at the close of 1820. He says:

The season in Edinburgh is the severest part of winter, and Princes Street in a clear sunset, with the Castle and the Pentland Hills in radiant glory, and the crowd illumined by the setting sun, was a sight perfectly original.

First you would see limping Sir Walter, talking as he walked with Lord Meadowbank; then tripped Jeffrey, keen, restless and fidgety; you next met Wilson, or Lockhart or Allan; or Thomson or Raeburn, as if they had agreed to make their appearance at once. It was a striking scene,—foreigners were impressed by it like myself. I wonder Allan never thought of it as the subject of a picture. It would make a fine one.

In such surroundings lived Raeburn, friendly and hospitable, and well known and respected by everyone. He was recognized as the leading painter of the North, and yet few of his numerous acquaintances have recorded anything about him in memoirs, diaries or letters. Far less is known of his life and affairs than of those of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough or Romney, although they belonged to the generation that preceded his. Raeburn, according to the writer of an obituary published in the *European Magazine*, talked freely about his experiences and had "inexhaustible stores of anecdote", and he must have told his friends something of the period he spent in Rome, a period that is almost blank in his biographies. Allan Cunningham, who knew Raeburn personally, has nothing to say of his residence in Rome except that he was well received, and sensibly advised, by Gavin Hamilton and Byres. The story of Raeburn's visit to London and introduction to Sir Joshua, before he went to Rome, is vague. It is certain, however, that he was acquainted with the great painter. Northcote, writing on July 28th, 1805, to a friend who was then visiting Edinburgh, says: "If you see Raeburn, the painter, let me have your opinion of his works. I believe he knows a little of me. I dined with him once at Sir Joshua Reynolds'". This may have been after Raeburn's return from Italy, for he was in London oftener than his various biographers have supposed.

William Carey was one of the few English writers on art who knew Raeburn and had been his guest in Edinburgh. In a note on Raeburn and his surroundings, published after his death, Carey says:

He lived in a handsome style. His town house is in one of the most fashionable streets of Edinburgh. His delightful villa at St Bernard's is in a romantic and picturesque spot, such as a poet or a painter would choose for a residence. He had a commission from Lord de Tabley to paint a picture for his gallery, and the subject left to his own choice. His anxiety to produce a work worthy of a place in that collection made him long fastidious. He at last selected Musidora, from Thomson's *Seasons*, but unfortunately he was called away before he could accomplish the object of his honourable ambition. His person was tall and robust, and his presence dignified; his complexion was florid and his countenance manly and prepossessing.

Carey adds that when he was last in Edinburgh, in 1819, "the genius of speculation, that foe to the picturesque, was hard at work and threatened soon to shut out the most beautiful part of the prospect from St Bernard's". This reference to a visit to Edinburgh in 1819 suggests that Carey may have been the writer of some paragraphs on Raeburn that appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* in October of that year. These notes were interesting to London readers, who knew nothing about the artist's personality, although they had seen and admired his portraits exhibited at the Royal Academy. Raeburn, who had a capital picture-gallery attached to his painting-room in York Place, lent it in 1819, for the first exhibition of the Institution for the encouragement of Fine Arts in Scotland. The *New Monthly Magazine*, after remarking that the exhibition contained eighty-seven pictures by Old Masters and two each by Sir Joshua and Richard Wilson, speaks in the following terms of the owner of the Gallery in which they were shown:

Mr Raeburn is a resident in Edinburgh, and fully employed. His portraits have a strong resemblance; his colouring is harmonious, his light and shadow broad, his pencilling free and mellow, his drawing good and his attitudes easy and agreeable. The tendency to a purplish tint in the shadows of his flesh is not unpleasing. His landscape backgrounds are loosely brushed in for effect, without much definition, and the slightness in the distant accessories

is in some instances, perhaps, carried too far. His style is original and wholly formed on his own study of nature. His reputation is high and his price for a whole-length portrait two hundred guineas.

Raeburn's death followed a very short illness, brought on, it is supposed, by a chill caught while on a country excursion with Sir Walter Scott and other friends. Scott, in a letter written soon after Raeburn's death, mentions the financial troubles of the painter. These troubles, and the way in which they were faced by Raeburn, resemble curiously those that Scott himself encountered later in life and dealt with as bravely. Scott says of Raeburn:

Sir Henry Raeburn, about twelve or thirteen years ago, had become totally embarrassed in his affairs, from incautious securities in which he was engaged for a near relation, who was in the West India trade. He met with considerate and kind treatment, but, notwithstanding, the result was his being deprived of the fortune he had honourably acquired by his profession. He bore this deprivation with the greatest firmness, resumed his pencil with increased zeal, and improved his natural talents by close study, so that he not only completely re-established his affairs, but has long been in the condition to leave an honest independence to his family.

The post of Limner to the King, for Scotland, was held by Raeburn at the time of his death, and an attempt was made by Scott to obtain it for his friend, "Conversation" Sharp, who was an amateur painter. He wrote to Sharp immediately after Raeburn's funeral: "The melancholy death of Sir Henry Raeburn leaves the office of King's Painter open. It was held, before Sir Henry, by Bishop Abercromby; *ergo*, it is not necessary that the official should be an artist, and it is fit for a gentleman to hold. *You* are both a gentleman and an artist, and why should you not be King's Painter?" Scott said he would at once write to a member of the Government about it, but found that Peel had already, and most properly, recommended the King to bestow the post upon Wilkie. Wilkie, who had made no solicitations, was delighted, and not the less because he had heard of the efforts made on behalf of Sharp. When writing to inform a painter friend of his appointment, he says: "All Edinburgh was in a ferment the moment the office was known to be vacant, and

I could tell you some odd stories of some of our great friends there, by whom wheel within wheel was set in motion to get it for artists who were friends—and also for *gentlemen-friends* who were not artists”.

Raeburn's last correspondence with the Royal Academy referred to a collection of engravings of members' works that was being formed in 1823. An entry in the Minutes of August 8th, states: “Produced two prints from the works of Sir H. Raeburn, sent by him previous to his decease, for the collection forming at the Academy”. Northcote sent a whole portfolio of prints for the collection, to which Phillips, Daniell and Bigg also contributed. Another interesting entry in the Minutes for 1823 is a report of the total receipts and expenditure of the Royal Academy since its foundation, submitted by the auditors, Soane and Westmacott. The entry runs thus: “Fifty-four years have elapsed since the foundation of the Royal Academy, during which period the disbursements have amounted to £173,119. 14s. 2d., and the receipts to £211,557. 11s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.”

A new rival to the Royal Academy was founded this year, in the shape of the Society of British Artists, which owed its origin to James Elmes, the architect. Elmes was the editor of the *Annals of the Fine Arts*, the journal that published some of Haydon's most violent attacks upon the Academy and in which, through Haydon's influence, Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale* first saw the light. Elmes, who was on bad terms with the Academy, and had been an unsuccessful candidate for an Associateship, suggested the idea of a new society of artists to William Linton, the landscape painter. Linton liked the idea and discussed it with some of his friends, and a meeting was held at Elmes' office, at which were present, among others, Linton, William Finden, the engraver, John Martin, Matthew Wyatt, and T. C. Hofland. John Glover, the landscape painter, was in the chair. Elmes informed the gathering that he had found a site for a gallery over a series of fireproof buildings in the rear of Suffolk Street and Pall Mall East, adjoining the Gallery of the Society of Painters in Water Colours. The buildings he said, belonged to John Nash, the

[1823]

ART IN ENGLAND

architect, whose terms for building the galleries, and for the ground rent, he had obtained. Elmes then read Nash's letter:

*June 11th, 1823*

Dear Sir

The house in Suffolk Street and the gallery and staircase will together cost £5764. If you can raise £1764, the rest may stand at a rent of seven per cent., redeemable in the whole or in part as shall suit the Society—the ground rent you know.

I think with you that the entrance should be as near Cockspur Street as possible. I have therefore altered your plan in that respect. I am pledged to give the other party an answer on Saturday. You must therefore make up your mind.

Yours truly

Jno. Nash.

A general meeting of the artists interested was held at the Freemason's Tavern, at which the plans were further discussed, and in August it was announced that Elmes had come to terms with Nash and that considerable progress had been made with the building of the Gallery in Suffolk Street. It was expected to be roofed-in within a few weeks and to be finished in time to open the first exhibition in March, 1824.

The Society's plan, and conditions of membership are set forth in the following letter, addressed by Linton, the landscape painter, to John Pye, the engraver:

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

*June 20th*  
1823

To John Pye Esq.,  
Cirencester Place

Sir

I am instructed by the Committee to inform you that as the number of Members who are to constitute the Society in the various departments is limited to Sixty, they will be happy to enrol your name previous to the General Meeting, which will take place in a few days.

The arrangements for the intended Gallery are upon an extensive scale, each Department having a distinct Exhibition Room, and the whole range being under one roof. The principles upon which the Society is founded are

broad and liberal, without any exclusive privileges or distinctions, and are calculated, they trust, to render those services to the cause of British Art which have so long been a desideratum.

I have the honour to be, Sir

Your obedient humble servant

W. Linton, Secretary, *pro tem.*

In the autumn took place the last of several sales at Fonthill Abbey, the palace in Wiltshire on the erection and equipment of which William Beckford had spent enormous sums. Beckford had arranged for the sale of the whole contents of the house in the autumn of 1822, and Christie, to whom the business had been entrusted, had prepared a complete catalogue. These plans, however, were changed when it was announced that Beckford had found a buyer for the Abbey and its contents in one lot, for the sum, according to rumour, of £350,000. The purchaser was Mr Farquhar, a millionaire gunpowder manufacturer. Beckford retained only the family pictures and certain books, and all the remaining contents of the Abbey were sold by auction by Farquhar in the autumn of 1823. Christie, however, was not the auctioneer. The sale was conducted by Phillips, who used with some alterations and many additions the huge catalogue which had been prepared by Christie.

The catalogue was worthy of the sale, for the dispersal of the treasures of Fonthill occupied thirty-nine days and prospective purchasers had to pay for the privileges both of viewing and bidding. A guinea was charged for a double ticket to view; and five guineas for a catalogue and admission for three persons during the sale. Many unpleasant stories were in circulation about pictures and furniture which had been catalogued although they had never belonged to Fonthill. A correspondent of the *Museum* pointed out that the hundred and fifteen pictures originally catalogued by Christie, had been extended by Phillips to four hundred and fifteen. Christie, he said, mentioned one Teniers and one Ostade in the collection, while Phillips catalogued twenty-one and ten respectively.

Constable speaks of the stories of additions, in a letter written to his wife on August 29th, some days before the sale began. He was staying with his friend, Archdeacon Fisher, at Gillingham in Dorsetshire, which was within driving distance of Fonthill. He says:

I was at Fonthill yesterday. It was very good-natured of Fisher to take me to see that extraordinary place. The ticket to admit two persons is a guinea, besides impositions afterwards. Fisher says there have been great changes in the articles since last year; so that it is quite an auctioneer's job. Many superb things are not now there, and many others added, especially pictures. One of the latter (or I am greatly mistaken) I saw at R's., just before I left town. Yesterday being a fine day a great many people were there. I counted more than thirty carriages and the same number of gigs, and two stage coaches; so that in spite of the guinea tickets there was a great mixture of company, and indeed very few genteel people. There was a large room fitted with boxes like a coffee house, for dinners, etc., etc. Mr Phillips' name seems as great here as Buonaparte's. Cards of various kinds, and boards, were put up, "Mr Phillips desires this—Mr Phillips takes the liberty of recommending the following inns for beds, etc." But I observed many long faces coming away from the said inns.

In spite of the rumours mentioned by Constable, crowds flocked to Fonthill during the thirty-nine days of the sale, which was without incident until it neared its close, and the "magnificent topaz cup, which had long been considered one of the chief objects of interest in the Abbey", was offered by Phillips. The topaz cup, which had a dragon handle of gold and was supported on a tripod stand, was said to have been made by Cellini as a wedding present for Catherine Cornaro.

For this cup a very high price was expected, but as soon as the auctioneer brought it forward, it was challenged by a London jeweller, Mr Kensington Lewis, of St James's Street, who declared that it was not topaz but crystal. This challenge caused a scene. The auctioneer said Mr Beckford had always believed it to be topaz and brought forward his agent to confirm the statement, and after some heated argument the cup was put up at three hundred guineas, and knocked down at six hundred. This was considered to be far below its value. On November 5th, a

few days after the conclusion of the sale, a letter from Kensington Lewis was published in *The Times* in which some uncivil things were said about Phillips. The writer remarked in conclusion:

And now, Sir, for the history of this cup, which I have taken some time and trouble to ascertain. I have traced it originally to have been in the possession of Mr Stanley, of Bond Street, who offered it twice for sale by auction for about £300, but was unable to obtain that bidding and ultimately sold it for considerably less. I have Mr Stanley's authority for stating that the cup was in his possession for a year and a half, and that during that time, he repeatedly offered it to the trade without being able to obtain a purchaser. It ultimately got into the hands of Mr Baldock of Hanway Street, who sold it to Mr Beckford for less than £300.

Beckford took no notice of this letter, but a reply to it was made by Phillips, who declined any responsibility for the description of the cup as it appeared in the Fonthill catalogue, which was identical with that in the catalogue prepared by Christie for the proposed sale of 1822. "If", said Phillips, "it should prove to be anything but an Hungarian Topaz, it will be returned to Mr Beckford as not answering the description he gave of it when he sold it."

One Associate of the Royal Academy was elected in 1823, on November 3rd. This was the architect, William Wilkins, who afterwards designed the National Gallery. In the final ballot he defeated the Scottish painter, William Allan, by fourteen votes to seven.

## CHAPTER IV

1824

THE Reverend Sir Henry Bate Dudley, who died at Cheltenham on February 1st, 1824, was the friend and champion of Gainsborough and the chronicler of his professional career in London. Of this career hardly anything was known, until I published in 1915, in my *Life of Gainsborough*, Bate Dudley's innumerable notes and articles on the work of the great painter. Most of these appeared in the columns of the *Morning Herald*, of which Bate Dudley was proprietor and editor, but the earliest were in the *Morning Post*, a journal that he helped to found, and conducted for several years. It is only through his first article on Gainsborough in the *Morning Post* that we know that the Edinburgh masterpiece—the full-length of the Hon. Mrs Graham—was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777, where it was described in the catalogue merely as *Portrait of a Lady*. From the notes and articles in the *Morning Herald* I discovered the dates, hitherto unknown, of such famous works as the *Mrs Robinson*, at the Wallace Gallery; the *Mrs Siddons*, the *Market Cart* and the *Cornard Wood*, at the National Gallery; and of many more in private collections, including *The Mall*, the *Cottage Girl with Dog and Pitcher*, the *Wood Gatherers*, the full-length of Mrs Sheridan, and the *Lavinia*. It was to Bate Dudley that Gainsborough wrote the remarkable letter, printed in the *Morning Herald*, in which the artist gives the history of the *Cornard Wood* and tells us all that is known of his boyhood.

It is curious that Bate Dudley's connection with Gainsborough is not mentioned in the lengthy and appreciative obituary published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* soon after his death, but it was referred to by John Taylor on February 9th, in some notes in the *Sun*. Taylor, who had known Bate Dudley intimately, and had

worked on the *Morning Post*, had a high opinion of his character. He says in the *Sun*:

Disagreeing with his partners in the *Morning Post* he abandoned all connection with it and instituted the *Morning Herald*, which he conducted with so much ability as to raise it to a height of reputation which it retains to this day, although some years have elapsed since he retired from the concern. He was on peculiar terms of intimacy with Garrick by whose advice he first directed his attention to dramatic composition. The last dramatic sketch by Sir Henry was an amusing little farce entitled *At Home*, the chief character in which was a gentleman who had excited public attention by his performance of the part of Romeo. Sir Henry was one of the earliest and most strenuous friends of Gainsborough, who painted two fine full-lengths of him and Lady Bate Dudley. He was a sound critic and had a partiality for and was fully conversant with the Fine Arts. He was a liberal host and his table was always enlivened by his wit, humour, and abundant store of anecdotes, which he related with admirable terseness and spirit. He was a judicious and intrepid magistrate and also an impressive preacher.

The full-lengths by Gainsborough of the baronet and his wife (now in the collection of Lady Burton) remained for many years after Bate Dudley's death in the house he built for himself at Bradwell in Essex, but most of his pictures were sold in 1823, not long before he went to live at Cheltenham. Among them was Morland's *Inside of a Stable*, a picture often described as the masterpiece of the artist, which Bate Dudley bought from the Royal Academy exhibition of 1791. It afterwards came into the possession of Bate Dudley's nephew, Thomas Birch Wolfe, who presented it to the National Gallery in 1877. In the following year he wrote to Sir Frederick Burton, then Director of the Gallery, and offered to present other works. In his letter, written on July 19th, 1878, from 40 Lansdowne Place, Brighton, Birch Wolfe says:

Being the sole survivor of the Birch Wolfe race and in my seventy-seventh year, I feel desirous of disposing in my life-time of some pictures on which I set a value, in a manner most congenial to my feelings.

A much admired full-sized half-length by Gainsborough of my late Uncle the Revd. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, Bart, came into my possession, together with *The Farmer's Stable* by Morland, which you have already in the Gallery; and with them seven sketches by the same artist, in Indian ink, about

eighteen inches square, framed and glazed. I have also a fine portrait by Chalon of "Miller", a celebrated greyhound, representing in the background a match between "Miller" and "Snowball", another celebrated greyhound. "Miller" was the property of Sir H. B. Dudley and was never beaten.

Should the half-length portrait and sketches, and the portrait of "Miller" be acceptable, I shall be happy to present them to the National Gallery.

Chalon's picture of the greyhound was declined, but Sir Frederick Burton gladly accepted the portrait of Bate Dudley, which has adorned the walls of the Gallery for more than half a century. The seven drawings were also accepted. These, it is believed, were sent by Gainsborough to Bate Dudley with the letter about the *Cornard Wood* landscape.

On February 10th two elections of Royal Academicians took place. In the first, Jeffry Wyatt, the architect, was chosen to fill the vacancy made by the death of Nollekens. He defeated William Wilkins, the architect, by thirteen votes to eleven. Leslie had three supporters in the preliminary voting and Constable one. Wyatt was a favourite of George IV, and it is recorded in the Academy Minutes that in the following October, when Wyatt sent in his Diploma drawing, "Mr Wyatt's letter stated that by his Majesty's permission his name had been changed to Wyatville". This piece of vanity, which caused Wyatt to be ridiculed everywhere, was due to his wish that he might not be confused with other architects of the same name.

The second contest, on February 10th, was for Raeburn's seat, and resulted in the return of George Jones by thirteen votes to eleven for Leslie. Only three votes were given to Constable, although he was three years senior to Jones as an Associate. Jones had seen some service, and as a captain of militia formed part of the army of occupation in Paris in 1815. He is described as Captain Jones in some of the early catalogues, and when he was appointed Keeper of the Royal Academy some years later, he made a nightly military inspection of the premises, carrying a drawn sword and attended by two porters with lanterns. He is best remembered for his supposed resemblance to the Duke of Wellington, of which he was intensely proud.

Jones, whose pictures are rarely seen to-day, was a painter of essentially popular subjects, principally battle-pieces. But he had higher ambitions, as he confessed to Miss Mitford, three years after his election as an Academician. She says of him, writing to Sir William Elford, on March 5th, 1827:

I was delighted with his pictures and his conversation. He is certainly out of health, and complained to me of being obliged to leave the high, classical and romantic style, in which he delights and of which he has so many splendid sketches, for the battle-pieces of which he is weary, and the old German and Flemish towns which employ his hands rather than his imagination; but of which two kinds his commissions mainly consist. He complained also of the number of commissions, being overworked. He has a scheme for making drawings from Sophocles, as Flaxman has done from Homer and Aeschylus, and which, as he only deferred it, out of compliment to that fine veteran, he will, I hope, now that he has gone, carry into speedy effect.

The building of the Gallery of the newly-founded Society of British Artists, in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, was finished early in the spring, and the first exhibition was opened on April 14th. The opening was preceded by a dinner, on the 13th, at which Thomas Heaphy, who had been elected President of the Society, was in the chair. Many men of social importance were present, including the Duke of Sussex, whose health was proposed by Douglas Kinnaird. The Duke, in acknowledging the toast, advised the new Society to avoid all conflict with other bodies of artists. The Society, he considered, sprang from the Royal Academy, which developed from the Society of Arts, an institution over which he had the honour to preside. "As a sort of grandfather then to the Society of British Artists", the Duke went on to say, "he would act the part which elder members of families were accustomed to act, by giving its members advice. He accordingly counselled them to avoid all unworthy jealousies of other institutions. The Society and the Royal Academy should go hand-in-hand."

Various other toasts were proposed, and then Hoffland, the landscape painter, rose and read a letter from Sir John Soane, R.A., regretting that the state of his eyes made it impossible for

him to be present at the dinner and enclosing a subscription of fifty guineas for the funds of the Society. Soane also urged a combination of interests, and said that he hoped the Academy and the other artistic societies would soon form one family. And a fortnight later the Academy showed its friendly feeling towards the Society of British Artists by sending its President an invitation to the Private View at Somerset House.

Haydon, although a supporter of the British Artists and a contributor to its first exhibition, did not join the Society. It may be that he could not afford the subscription, for he was almost penniless at this time; or perhaps his dislike of the lighting of the newly-built Gallery in Suffolk Street prevented him from seeking membership. He thought the lighting ruinous. "A man", he said, "might almost as well exhibit his picture under the ray of a burning lens. The members are modern landscape painters who want all the staring light possible, destroying all sentiment and all art." Haydon's picture at the first exhibition, *Silenus Intoxicated*, did not attract much attention. The most popular work was *The Seventh Plague* by John Martin, which was bought by Mr Lambton (afterwards Lord Durham) for five hundred guineas. The exhibition made an excellent start, for on the first day more than a thousand persons paid for admission and eight hundred catalogues were sold.

At the Royal Academy, the exhibition, hung by Beechey, Mulready, and the younger Reinagle, boasted some novelty in arrangement. The pictures were not hung as before, to the very top of the walls of the Great Room, almost touching the skylight. The upper part of each wall was draped, to the great improvement of the appearance of the room. The exhibition, although it had few striking features, appears to have been of average merit, but it was condemned absolutely by the critic of *Blackwood's Magazine*. "What in the name of wonder", he wrote, "possessed the Committee to admit all these things? Artists indeed! Why signposts, tea-trays, stoneware plates and saucers, are works of the sublimest art compared with ten-twelfths of the efforts that blaze along these interminable walls."

Lawrence's group, *The Children of Charles B. Calmady, Esq.* (99), was the most popular work in the exhibition. The artist himself thought it to be the best picture of its kind he had ever painted, and one of the few he wished to be remembered by. He fell in love with the children when they were first brought to his house, and on that account painted them for much less than his usual charge, which Mr Calmady could not have afforded. The group was taken to Windsor and shown to the King, who wished to purchase it. There was nothing but admiration in the newspapers for the Calmady children, but Lawrence's portraits of men were subjected to some bantering comments in the *Morning Chronicle*, whose critic said of them, "The portraits of Lord Stowell (38) and Sir William Curtis (291) are, we think, the best. Both are certainly admirable likenesses, and characteristic mixtures of intellect in the one case and good humour in the other, with nearly equal quantities of fat. If, however, we were to find any fault we should complain that some of the rubicundity which is the property of the Alderman, has been abstracted from him and bestowed upon the learned Peer. Sir Thomas is too much in the habit of clothing with his roseate hues countenances which nature has 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'".

Sir William Curtis—Alderman and ex-Lord Mayor of London—numbered Constable among his friends and was an admirer of *The Hay Wain*, which he had some idea of purchasing when it was exhibited at the British Institution. *The Hay Wain*, however, was still in Constable's studio, but his picture in the Academy exhibition of 1824 was sold at the Private View to Mr Morrison for a hundred and fifty guineas. This picture, *A Boat passing a Lock* (180), had many admirers, and the following note upon it, which appeared in the *Literary Gazette*, must have given great pleasure to its painter:

No. 180. *A Boat passing a Lock*, J. Constable, A. We have always had occasion to mark the skill with which this artist, in a style peculiar to itself, effects the most perfect representation of the objects in his study, whether of foreground or of distance. The character of his details, like those of Wilson, appear as if struck out by a single touch; but this, we are well aware, comes

only by great practice and much previous thought and calculation. In none of his former works have these essential qualities been more distinctly visible than in this picture. It is a fine example of the picturesque with which its striking and powerful execution well accords.

For Wilkie, temporarily fallen from his high estate, the Academy exhibition was a sad experience. His new methods were not approved, and little notice was taken of his pictures, *The Smugglers* and *The Cottage Toilet*. The critics speak of his declining fame and one of them in commenting upon the neglect of his pictures unkindly recalls those of earlier exhibitions, with crowds before them, "trying to obtain glimpses over one another's shoulders". A writer in the *Metropolitan Literary Journal* condemns his present "dark, clammy style of colouring and handling". "Mr Wilkie", he says, "should borrow his *Blind Fiddler* from Sir George Beaumont to hang in his study, and see how he has retrograded from a style that formed the basis of his deservedly great reputation."

A notice of Beechey's work in the *Sun* of May 4th is worth quoting because it gives names to three portraits that are not identified in the list compiled by Mr William Roberts in his *Life of Beechey*. The *Sun* says:

The *Portrait of a Lady* as mentioned in the catalogue, by Sir William Beechey, is Mrs Rothschild (88); the portrait of a lady of fashion by the same artist, is, we presume, Lady Owen, as it seems to be an exact portrait of that lady. Another portrait by the same artist, in the new room, represents Mr Claridge of Jerveaux Abbey, Yorkshire.

Turner was not represented at the Royal Academy this year, and there have been many conjectures as to the cause of his absence. Newspaper critics of the exhibition of 1824 give the reason as "Royal employment". This employment was none other than the painting of the large *Battle off Cape Trafalgar*, 21st October, 1805, which was a commission from George IV. The date of this picture has not, I believe, been given by any authority on Turner, but it has been assigned tentatively to 1808 by Armstrong and Hamerton. It is not known exactly when the commission was given but it was probably in the autumn of 1823,

as towards the end of that year Turner was in correspondence with John Christian Schetky, the marine painter, concerning sketches of the ships engaged at Trafalgar. The following letter from Turner is quoted in the *Life of Schetky*, who was living at Portsmouth in 1823:

December 3rd, 1823.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your kind offer of the *Téméraire*; but I can bring in very little, if any of her hull, because of the *Redoubtable*. If you will make me a sketch of the *Victory* (she is in Hayle Lake or Portsmouth Harbour) three-quarter bow on starboard side, or opposite the bow port, you will much oblige; and if you have a sketch of the *Neptune*, Captain Freemantle's ship, or know any particulars of *Santissima Trinidad* or *Redoubtable*, any communication I will thank you much for. As to the former offer of yours, the Royal Barge, I beg to say that I requested your brother to give you my thanks and that whenever you sent to him, the same would be in time; but there is an end to that commission owing to the difficulty attending engraving the subjects.

Your most truly obliged

J. M. W. Turner.

P.S. The *Victory*, I understand, has undergone considerable alterations since the action, so that a slight sketch will do, having my own when she entered the Medway (with the body of Lord Nelson) and the Admiralty or Navy Office drawing.

Another letter to Schetky, written nine months later, shows that the sketches were sent to Turner and returned by him:

September 21st, 1824.

Dear Sir,

Your sketches will be with you, I trust, (by the *Rocket* coach) by tomorrow evening. They shall be sent to the coach-office this evening. *Many* thanks for the loan of them, and believe me to be your most truly obliged,

J. M. W. Turner.

To J. C. Schetky, Esq.

The Trafalgar picture must have been finished early in the spring of 1824, as Mr Lambton told Haydon at the end of February that the Government was dissatisfied with it. Three months later it was described in the *Literary Gazette* by a contributor to that journal of a series of articles entitled, "Sketches

of Society". One of these, published on May 22nd, dealt with St James's Palace. The writer said of one of the State Rooms, that a portrait of George III was flanked on either side by pictures by De Louthembourg of Lord Howe's "First of June" victory, and by Turner, of Trafalgar. The former he considered one of the best works by the artist, "but in rather too cool a tone of colouring for such a subject. Turner, on the contrary, is in his new performance, nearly all fire. The *Victory* is pouring out her tremendous broadside, and all the foreground and right is wrapt in the blare of the red artillery".

According to William James, the naval historian, Turner's picture, which, when he wrote in 1826 was still at St James's Palace, was painted because the Surveyor-General of the Board of Works happened to come across and purchase the De Louthembourg. When this was hung at the palace, as a memento of the naval action which it illustrates, it was realized that a companion work illustrating Trafalgar, was required, and, says James:

The first marine-painter of the day undertook the task, and in due time, the large area of canvas, which to correspond with the other picture became necessary for this, was covered with all the various tints which Mr Turner knows so well how to mingle and combine to give effect to his pictures and excite the admiration of the beholders. Unfortunately for the subject which this splendid picture is meant to represent, scarcely a line of truth, beyond perhaps the broadside view of the *Victory's* hull, is to be seen upon it.

James says that the De Louthembourg, which was painted soon after the famous action of 1794, was equally false as a representation of the event, and was condemned by Lord Howe, who declared that the picture was a libel on his flagship, the *Queen Charlotte*.

The month of May, which saw the hanging of the new picture of Trafalgar by Turner, also witnessed the opening of the National Gallery, of which Turner in later days was to be one of the most munificent of its many benefactors. The need of such an institution had been urged on the Government for many years by the press, and by private persons of influence. Of the latter none was more ardent or more unselfish than Sir George Beaumont.

His friend Lord Dover, when speaking of him after his death, said that the foundation of a National Gallery was the object that Sir George had most at heart. "During the years 1821, 1822 and 1823", said Lord Dover, "he was constantly talking to me on the subject, and urging the various reasons which rendered such an institution desirable in this country. He frequently begged me to speak to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, about it, and always assured me he would give his own pictures to the nation, as soon as he saw a place allotted for their reception."

Beaumont's desire was realized in 1824 owing to the death in 1823 of John Julius Angerstein, a wealthy London merchant of Russian extraction who owned one of the most famous collections of pictures in England. Sir Thomas Lawrence, who had been Angerstein's intimate friend and had helped him to form the collection, was now asked by his son John to advise as to its disposal. The Prince of Orange was mentioned as a possible purchaser, and Lawrence wrote instantly in reply:

Russell Square

Dear Angerstein,

I do most sincerely think that you should not ask less than £70,000 from the Prince of Orange; and as sincerely do I pray and implore that *at* that price he may not have them.

At least, before they are sold, as just patriotism and duty to our country, they should be offered for a less sum to the Government—to Lord Liverpool.

Ever most truly yours, but at this moment with great anxiety and dread!

Thomas Lawrence.

Lawrence's advice was followed, but, to his great annoyance, he was not consulted during the negotiations with the Government after the pictures had been offered to Lord Liverpool, who, as his correspondence indicates, had already taken expert opinion as to their value. That he had made up his mind to secure them for the nation some time before the first approaches were made to him by Angerstein's heir and executors is shown by a letter written to Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire, in which he says:

We are about to lay the foundation of a National Gallery in this country by the purchase of Mr Angerstein's pictures. You know that Sir George

Beaumont has announced his intention of leaving his pictures to the public, and I am persuaded that when a gallery is once established there will be many bequests. The great object is large pictures of eminence. Small pictures are as well dispersed in private collections but there are scarcely any houses in London capable of containing large pictures, and the consequence is that they are either not bought or are sent to great houses in the country where few can see them.

This letter was written by Lord Liverpool on September 19th, 1823, but it was not until two months later that his negotiations commenced with the owner of the pictures. They were preceded by some correspondence between Angerstein's son and Sir Charles Long, who was one of the leading connoisseurs of the time and the virtual chief of the British Institution, and who enjoyed the confidence both of the King and of the Prime Minister. Long had enquired the price of the collection, and John Angerstein answered him in the following note which was accompanied by a communication from his father's executors, Sir George Martin and Mr A. H. Thomson:

My Dear Sir

I have the pleasure of enclosing my father's executors' price for the pictures, and I trust you will admit that we have been far from immoderate in our valuation.

Believe me, my Dear Sir,

faithfully yours,

John Angerstein.

Pall Mall, *Monday*, 17th Nov., 1823.

The following is the letter from the executors. The "Mr Young's work" mentioned is a catalogue of the Angerstein pictures prepared by John Young the engraver, and the Keeper of the British Institution:

Sir

London, 17 Nov., 1823.

In reference to the communications with which you have favoured Mr Angerstein on the subject of his late Father's Collection of Pictures in Pall Mall, which we, as his Executors, are instructed to dispose of, we have the honour to state to you, that well knowing the great satisfaction it would have given our late Friend, that the Collection should form part of a National

Gallery, we shall feel much gratified by His Majesty's Government becoming the purchasers of the whole for such a purpose.

Understanding from Mr Angerstein that we should state the price we think ourselves authorized to take for the Collection under the above circumstances, we beg to name the sum of Sixty Thousand Pounds as the price we are prepared to accept. We should state that the whole of the Pictures described in Mr Young's Work are included in the above offer with the exception of Mrs Angerstein's Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the three Pictures by Mr Fuseli.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servants,

George Martin

A. H. Thomson.

Sir Charles Long.

Long forwarded both the letters to the Prime Minister, whose answer was as follows:

*Nov. 21, 1823.*

My dear Long

I have received your communication on the subject of Mr Angerstein's pictures.

I understand that he proposes that the Government shall purchase them for £60,000. You are well aware that I had taken measures to ascertain the value of them, and none of the valuations amount to that sum.

In a transaction of this nature it is impossible not to take into consideration the honour that will attach to Mr Angerstein's family from the circumstance of his collection forming the foundation of a National Gallery, and it appears that Mr Angerstein was himself so fully aware of this advantage that he expressed to you his belief that his father would have disposed of the collection for such an object upon more liberal terms than if they were sold in any other manner.

I must further observe that as this is a public transaction and as I have to justify it to Parliament I cannot consider myself as warranted in offering a price for the pictures beyond their fair valuation.

I should at the same time deem it unworthy of the Government to endeavour to strike a hard bargain in any transaction of this nature.

But I conscientiously believe that when I make the offer of £50,000 I am offering that which will be liberal on the part of the Public and, under all the circumstances of the case, advantageous to Mr Angerstein to accept.

Ever sincerely yours,

Liverpool.

This brought forth a long and interesting statement from Mr Thomson, addressed to John Angerstein but intended for Lord Liverpool, to whom it was sent. It contains information about the pictures and explains why the executors valued them at £60,000. The artist mentioned as the highest authority in the kingdom was, of course, Lawrence; and the reference to Beckford and Sebastian del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus* concerns an offer of which I shall speak later. Mr Thomson writes:

Austin Friars

24 Nov. 1823.

My dear John

Thank you for your communication of Sir C. Long's note, enclosing Lord Liverpool's letter of the 21st, in which he states that the sum of £60,000 named by Sir George Martin and myself for the Pictures in Pall Mall was more than he should feel justified in giving on the part of the Public, and proposes £50,000 as a sum that will be liberal on the part of the Public and advantageous to your family. As Sir C. Long may consider that we, as your father's executors, have endeavoured to obtain too high a price for the collection, I think it right, in justification of Sir George Martin and myself, to remind you of the grounds on which we thought ourselves authorized to expect the first-mentioned sum from the Government.

First, you will recollect your father's lowest valuation was £76,000—a sum which before we took the opinions of artists on the subject we had none of us thought overrated the merits of the works. Mr Woodburn gave us reason to suppose some collectors might give in order to keep the whole entire in the country, £60,000, and an artist whom we must consider the highest authority in the Kingdom had assured you that he had given his opinion publicly when a lower sum was named, that they ought not to be sold under £60,000, to which the valuation of Mr Seguier approached so nearly (being £57,000) and which we understood that gentleman would be prepared to justify in case any public enquiry should be instituted, that we could hardly, in justice to the property entrusted to our management fix upon a less sum, even without considering the large price offered at one time by Mr Beckford, for the Sebastian with a few other minor pictures.

In reply to one of Lord Liverpool's expressions, alluding to what would have been your father's feelings on the advantage of the collection becoming the foundation of a National Gallery, I am not of opinion that he would have sold the pictures for less than their actual value, to the Public, tho' had it been a question of contribution he might have given a part or the whole for such a purpose.

For myself, I should not, as an executor, feel justified in accepting Lord Liverpool's offer, but I should not hesitate to abide by Mr Seguiet's valuation, which must appear of high authority to Sir George Martin and myself, as it was obtained in consequence of Sir C. Long's own recommendation.

You are quite at liberty, if you think proper, to communicate my ideas to Sir Charles Long—my belief is that Sir George Martin, who is not in town, will agree with me in what I have stated.

I am always, Dear John,

Very truly yours,

A. H. Thomson.

Lord Liverpool's next communication offered a basis for a settlement, which was approved by Mr Thomson, and by the end of the year 1823 the Angerstein collection was the property of the nation. The following are the letters from Lord Liverpool, and from Mr Thomson on behalf of himself and Sir George Martin, which led to the completion of this most important business:

Fife House

25 Nov. 1823.

My dear Long

I have received your letter with the enclosures from Mr Angerstein and Mr Thomson, and in order to bring the matter to which they relate to a conclusion I am quite ready on the part of the public to purchase Mr Angerstein's collection of pictures for any sum between fifty and sixty thousand pounds which Mr Seguiet and Mr Woodburn will state in writing to be their price upon a *fair and reasonable valuation*. I say *fair and reasonable valuation* because I am aware that upon these occasions there is sometimes an extreme valuation as distinguished from the former, and though this may occasionally be admitted in the case of a single picture, I cannot think it maintainable in respect to a collection in which every picture is valued separately.

I have no objection to your communicating this letter to Mr Angerstein.

Believe me to be,

My dear Long,

Ever sincerely yours,

Liverpool.

Austin Friars,  
19th December, 1823.

Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge your note of this date, accompanying Lord Liverpool's letter, in which he consents on the part of the public to purchase Mr Angerstein's collection at the sum Mr Segquier named as their value, and I will take care to procure from that gentleman a more formal document than the short note Mr Angerstein sent to you, presuming that Mr Segquier can have no objection to furnish one. In the meantime I will communicate to Sir George Martin, and to Mr Angerstein, Lord Liverpool's acquiescence to the terms proposed, which, of course, brings the matter to a conclusion—the purchase money for the thirty-eight pictures being £57,000.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most faithful, humble servant,

A. H. Thomson.

To Sir Charles Long.

The “more formal document”, which was duly supplied by Segquier, was a detailed valuation of all the pictures in the collection. Some of its estimates are curious, for Wilkie's *Village Holiday* was regarded by Segquier as the most valuable of the English pictures and worth twice as much as Sir Joshua's splendid portrait of Lord Heathfield. Wilkie's picture is also rated in value above the famous *Portrait of Gevartius*, then so called, but now known to represent Cornelius van der Geest. The following is the document sent to Lord Liverpool:

Having very carefully examined the Collection of pictures of the late J. J. Angerstein, Esq., in Pall Mall, I am of opinion that the said Collection, containing the 38 pictures named in the accompanying list, is of the value of £57,000.

To this valuation I subscribe my name, the 26th day of December, 1823.

William Segquier.

To the Executors of the late Mr J. J. Angerstein.

Titian	Ganymede	£2000
Rubens	Rape of the Sabines	£2500
Vandyck	Emp. Theo expelled the Church by St Ambrose	£2500
Claude	Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba	£5000
Claude	Marriage of Rebecca	£3500

## SEGUIER VALUES THE PICTURES

[1824]

An. Carracci	St John in the Wilderness	£500
Lud. Carracci	Susannah and the Elders	£600
Velasquez	Philip IV of Spain and his Queen	£300
N. Poussin	Bacchanalian Triumph	£1500
Domenichino	Erminia with the Shepherds	£600
Titian	Venus and Adonis	£3500
Claude	Landscape—Morning	£2500
Claude	An Italian Seaport	£1500
S. del Piombo	The Raising of Lazarus	£8000
Titian	A Concert	£500
Raphael	Pope Julius the Second	£600
Correggio	Christ on the Mount	£800
Vandyck	Portrait of Gevartius	£700
Rembrandt	The Nativity	£1200
Rembrandt	The Woman taken in Adultery	£4000
Wilkie	The Village Holiday	£800
Claude	The Embarkation of St Ursula	£4500
An. Carracci	Apollo and Silenus	£500
Hogarth	Six pictures of Marriage à la Mode	£2500
G. Poussin	A Land Storm	£1200
do.	Abraham and Isaac	£2500
Cuyp	Landscape with Cattle and figures	£900
Rubens	Holy Family in a Landscape	£400
Vandyck	Portrait of Rubens	£400
Sir J. Reynolds	Portrait of Lord Heathfield	£400
Correggio	Study of Heads	£250
do.	do.	£250
Hogarth	His own portrait	£100

The following nine pictures in the above list are not now attributed to the artists to whom they were assigned by the advisers of Angerstein: "*Ganymede*"; "*Philip IV of Spain and his Queen*"; "*Erminia with the Shepherds*"; "*A Concert*"; "*Pope Julius the Second*"; "*Christ on the Mount*"; "*Holy Family in a Landscape*"; and the two Studies of Heads.

The pictures now purchased for the nation had been for many years under the care of William Nirling, an old servant of Angerstein's in whom he placed great trust, and were insured for £40,000 in the Sun and Phoenix Offices. On January 10th this was raised to £57,000 by Lord Liverpool, through William

Seguier, who was looking after the pictures for the Government although he had as yet no official appointment. Lord Liverpool did not know where to exhibit the new acquisitions and Seguier recommended as suitable some rooms in Old Bond Street, of which Sir Charles Long approved when he saw them. This idea, however, was abandoned when it was discovered that Angerstein's executors were willing to sell the remainder of the lease of the house, No. 100 Pall Mall, in which the pictures were hanging. The lease was purchased and this at once removed any difficulties that stood in the way of exhibiting the collection until a proper gallery should be built.

Seguier was appointed Keeper of the National Gallery on March 30th, and in six weeks prepared the house for its new purpose. But until May 10th, when the pictures were on view, their acquisition had been mentioned by only one journal, the *Guardian*, which stated in January that they had been purchased "by desire of His Majesty". The King, according to Sir Charles Long, was the first to suggest the acquisition of the Angerstein pictures for the nation. Incredible as it may seem, the opening of the National Gallery on May 10th, so long desired, passed with little or no notice. The daily journals that, three or four weeks earlier, had described in long articles the inauguration of the new gallery of the Society of British Artists, almost ignored the opening of the first gallery of pictures owned by the State. *The Times*, on May 11th, announced the event as follows:

Mr Angerstein's collection of pictures. Yesterday, for the first time the "national gallery" of pictures was opened to the public at 100 Pall Mall, formerly Mr Angerstein's town residence. At present the exhibition consists of these pictures only. It was visited by numbers of the Nobility and Gentry in the course of the day. It will continue open every day.

The *Morning Post*, two or three days later, mentioned the opening of the Gallery in a paragraph as brief as that of *The Times* and similar in terms. The *Morning Chronicle*, the *Sun*, the *New Times* and other newspapers, passed over the event in silence. No journal that I have seen gave a word of description of the pictures, and the only comment on the house in which

they were shown was the following, which appeared in the *News of Literature and Fashion*:

On our visit to this superb collection we certainly were much gratified by the easy access to the rooms, the attention of the porters and officers of the house, and the total absence of that *apparent* suspicion which in other of our London exhibitions pursues the visitor with an impudent and scrutinizing glance that seems to look abroad on all mankind as enemies, and upon every hand as that of a pilferer. The rooms here are but three in number, and these are small and ill-proportioned, but the pictures create a palace for themselves.

There is no mention of the opening of the National Gallery in the diaries, memoirs or conversations of Lawrence, Wilkie, Constable, Leslie, Collins or Northcote. Haydon, however, visited the Gallery a few days after it was opened, and expresses in his *Diary* what must have been the feeling of most artists, the pleasure of being able to see the Angerstein pictures without any formality of tickets or obtaining leave. "It was delightful", he says, "to walk into the Gallery just as you felt inclined, without trouble or inconvenience. I argue a great and rapid advance to the art of the country from the facility of comparison this will afford the public." It was like Haydon, when looking afterwards at his own *Lazarus*, to say: "O God! Grant it may reach the National Gallery in a few years and be placed in fair competition with Sebastian del Piombo".

Haydon was referring to Sebastian del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus*, the largest of the thirty-eight pictures which comprised the Angerstein collection. This was the show-piece of the Gallery and remained so for many years. Even as late as the 'sixties, when Tennyson took his children to the National Gallery, he always, according to his son, led them first to the *Raising of Lazarus*. This picture was supposed by some authorities to be one of the finest in the world. It is said that Beckford offered Angerstein £16,000 for the Del Piombo, six of the Hogarths and a picture by Annibale Carracci, although he knew the *Raising of Lazarus* had been repaired. According to the elder Landseer, the repairs were effected by Benjamin West, to whose hand has been credited the

present surface of the figure of Lazarus. Writing in 1834, Landseer says: "Before its late refreshment by a thin coat of varnish, all eyes might see that this part of the picture had been more freshly painted than the rest". A correspondent of the *Literary Gazette* in 1829 declared that Fuseli, when lecturing to the Royal Academy students, picked out a piece of West's re-painting as a striking illustration of the force of Sebastian del Piombo's colouring. Hazlitt, who perhaps had not heard of West's additions to the picture, wrote rapturously of it as "a magnificent structure built of solid and valuable materials", and praised highly the figure of Lazarus.

Hazlitt, when he wrote, had enjoyed no opportunity of judging the quality of the *Raising of Lazarus*, for he had seen the picture only in the bad light of the drawing-room of Angerstein's house—the house that had now been rented for a temporary National Gallery, although it was wholly unfit for the display of works of art. It was a mere makeshift. The exhibition rooms, to which only two hundred visitors were admitted at one time, consisted, to use a contemporary description, only of "a parlour on the ground floor and two apartments on the first floor of a moderately sized old-fashioned house".

The staff of the infant National Gallery was commensurate with its modest accommodation, and the salaries paid seem absurdly insufficient to-day. William Segulier, the first Keeper, stated in 1836 that the entire cost of the administration, including salaries, taxes, and all incidental expenses, had never amounted to a thousand a year. The following is a list of the original staff of 1824 and their salaries:

William Segulier	Keeper	£200
G. S. Thwaites	Assistant Keeper and Secretary	£150
J. P. Wildsmith	Attendant	Two guineas a week
J. Weeks	do.	do.
J. Upson	Police officer, and to help with sticks and umbrellas	£1. 4s. a week
H. Newham	Porter	£80
Martha Hurst	Housemaid	£50

By the end of 1835, eleven years after the opening of the Gallery, the only increase to the staff had been one attendant, T. Rimer, appointed in 1827. In the first year at Trafalgar Square the Gallery staff was the same, with the addition of one attendant at two guineas a week, a stoker at eighteen shillings, and an assistant-housemaid at twenty pounds a year. The students' days at this time were Friday and Saturday, and the Gallery was always closed for six weeks in the autumn, during which period the attendants received no wages.

One of the first students who went to copy pictures at the National Gallery in Pall Mall was Thomas Sidney Cooper, R.A., the animal painter. In 1824 Cooper was a young man of twenty-one, drawing as a probationer in the Royal Academy Schools. Writing in his autobiography he says of this period :

It was the rule that none of the students should draw at the Royal Academy on Saturdays, but as this enforced idleness did not suit me, I applied for and obtained, permission to copy from a beautiful little collection of pictures at the "Angerstein Gallery" in Pall Mall, about six doors from Carlton House. Being admitted a student there, I went regularly every Saturday and made water-colour drawings from the paintings in Mr Angerstein's collection, oil-painting not being allowed in the gallery. . . . There, then, I spent my Saturdays, revelling in the beautiful works of art that I found collected round me, and feeling that even to see and examine such treasures was an education in itself. Till I came to London I scarcely knew that such things existed. The Keeper, Major Thwaites, was an extremely kind man with considerable knowledge and of a refined taste in art, and he often encouraged me by observing that I could imitate very correctly.

Sidney Cooper, who mentions that Angerstein's collection was afterwards acquired for the nation, does not seem to have realized that the house in which he worked, in the summer of 1824, was already the National Gallery. He speaks of it as Mr Angerstein's and says, wrongly, that the pictures were not bought by the Government until the end of that year. Major Thwaites, who was the Secretary, not the Keeper, of the National Gallery, was an infantry officer on half-pay. He was most conscientious in the execution of his duties and served as Secre-

tary for nearly thirty years without any increase of his original salary of £150.

The foundation of the National Gallery appears to have been welcomed by all the artists of prominence with one exception. Constable condemned the idea when it was discussed in 1822; and in May, 1824, after the Gallery had been opened in Pall Mall, he prophesied that its effect would be to trouble the rising art and to suffocate and strangle all original feeling. Yet a little later, as he told his friend Fisher, he liked to look into the Gallery to worship Claude, the great French landscape painter, whose countrymen his own work was soon to interest. For it was in this year that two of his pictures were bought by a French dealer, who exhibited them in Paris, where they made a sensation. One of the pictures was *The Hay Wain*, the landscape, now in the National Gallery, which the Frenchman, Charles Nodier, admired and described, when he saw it at the Royal Academy in 1821.

The departure of these pictures from London was remarked by W. H. Pyne, the artist and critic, who knew Constable and appreciated his work. He said in a note written in the *Somerset House Gazette* on July 10th, after a visit to Constable's house, where he had previously seen *The Hay Wain* hanging neglected:

It was but recently we missed two large landscape-compositions that had long since returned to the study in which they were painted, and in which they might have remained, perhaps till Doomsday, had not a collector from Paris called upon their ingenious author, Mr Constable, and purchased them in their accumulated dust as they hung almost obsolete on his walls. One of these showed a waggon passing a mill-stream, a picture worthy in all its attributes of the best masters of the old Flemish school. These pictures had been seen, and their truth and originality admitted by the general acclamation of all artists and amateurs. What noble collector can show a picture of this genuine painter of the English School?

*The Times* correspondent in Paris recorded on July 8th the arrival of the pictures in that city. "They are", he said, "to occupy a place in the approaching exhibition of the works of living artists at the Louvre. These landscapes have attracted great attention at Paris, and are justly admired by the French

painters." At the Louvre they were more admired than ever, and six months later Constable wrote to Fisher: "I had this morning a letter from Paris, informing me that on the King's visit to the exhibition, he was pleased to award me a gold medal for the merit of my landscapes".

In the autumn Wilkie, Leslie, Stuart Newton, Landseer and Westmacott went to Scotland, and all were in Edinburgh at the same time. Leslie, Newton and Landseer had a common purpose in visiting the Scottish capital, a purpose that was explained in *The Times* in the following article, in which their return to London was announced:

Each of these gentlemen resided for a short time with Sir Walter Scott, and each has brought away a portrait of his host. The three portraits differ in some respects from each other but they are all considered very like the original. There is nothing of an elevated character about the head of Sir Walter; the predominant expression is shrewdness—we had almost said cunning.

In Mr Leslie's picture, Sir Walter is represented sitting in a chair, holding in his right hand a stick, which, on account of his lameness, is his inseparable companion. The hair, and the marks of approaching baldness, are well depicted. Mr Leslie has reverted to the practice, which once generally prevailed, of painting the arms of the sitter in a corner of the picture. The colours of the arms in the present instance are very quiet and the object does not appear amiss. The motto is "Wat it Weel".

Messrs Newton and Leslie have painted Sir Walter in his library. The dress is the same in all the pictures—namely a green coat, yellow waistcoat, light trousers and a black neckcloth. Messrs Newton and Landseer have added a leathern belt, attached to which Sir Walter carries a hammer and a small hatchet which he uses very frequently in pruning the trees on his estate, an occupation of which he is very fond. Mr Landseer, who is known to the public only as a painter of animals, has proved by this effort that his talents are not limited to that branch of art in which he has rendered himself eminent. Although the portrait was made in a very short time and under some disadvantages, the likeness is considered to be excellent. Mr Newton's picture, which should before have been stated to be a very clever production, is to be immediately engraved. Mr Leslie's portrait is destined for a gentleman in America, for whom it was expressly painted.

Leslie's patron was that eminent American man of letters, George Ticknor, who had been more than once the guest of

Sir Walter. The portrait adorned Ticknor's house in Boston for many years. Landseer's little study is in the National Portrait Gallery.

Wilkie's journey to Scotland was undertaken with a view to gather materials for the completion of his picture of the King's visit to Holyrood, and to make sketches for the projected representation of John Knox preaching at St Andrews. Welcomed by the Edinburgh painters, who entertained him at a dinner at which Landseer was also a guest, he remained in Scotland until the beginning of November, when the news of his mother's serious illness caused him to hasten back to London. Of Wilkie's mother, who came to London to keep house for him in 1813, Allan Cunningham speaks with great respect, although he tells us nothing about her, but Mrs Thomson, Wilkie's friend, who knew and liked his mother, speaks sympathetically of her "sedate, simple ways; her neat, inexpensive, becoming attire, and unpretending manners", and of her speech—"that gentle sort of Scotch which falls not harshly upon the ear, but gives great piquancy to the most ordinary remarks". Mrs Thomson says that Wilkie was not in the least like her and must have obtained his looks from his father.

Mrs Wilkie's health had been declining for some time before her death, and her housekeeping duties had passed gradually into the hands of her daughter, who, says Raimbach, added to skill in domestic management, "a degree of elegance and refinement that graced Wilkie's establishment, suitably to the station of such a man". Miss Wilkie was always hostess at the dinner-parties given by her brother at Kensington to his artist friends. Turner dined at Kensington for the first time not long before Mrs Wilkie's death, and his behaviour did not commend itself to her daughter. Wilkie, writing to Mrs Nursey, the wife of his Suffolk friend, the amateur painter, says, when describing one of these entertainments:

Last week we had some of my brother-artists to dinner—Messrs Turner, Callcott, Chantrey, etc., and in order to entertain them in the greatest style we sported a bottle of the Hock Mr Robert [Nursey] was so kind as to send

us, which I assure you was much admired by the cognoscenti in matters of taste. It was the first time Mr Turner had been to visit us, and Mr Nurse will be amused to learn that my sister has upon the occasion conceived the most rooted objection to that artist, whom so many admire, from his habit of tasting everything and leaving a good deal of everything upon his plate. It is possible, therefore, that even Mr Turner may have too much taste, which however serviceable in his pictures, may be more than enough for his eating. But this is *entre nous*.

The death of his mother, and other family troubles, together with the little interest shown by the public in his work exhibited at the Royal Academy, tried Wilkie severely in 1824, and after his return from Scotland, his health, never good, broke down altogether. Towards the end of the year he called upon Mrs Thomson, who had not seen him for some months and was shocked at his appearance. She says of this meeting, in her *Recollections of Literary Characters*:

His pale face was ghastly, his eyes looked as if they were made of partially opaque glass, and a deep melancholy sat upon that thoughtful brow. He told me the physicians feared there was some organic disease forming in his head. "I feel", he said, mournfully, "as if I wore an iron crown. They tell me it is work. My palette, my paint-brush, are laid aside, I must travel. Indeed it is of no consequence their telling me not to work—I cannot even think. If I paint one half-hour", he said, holding his hand to his head, "I feel it here."

Wilkie was very much interested in the election of an Associate of the Royal Academy, held on November 1st. He was then in Scotland, but voted by proxy, and his correspondence on this subject with Sir Thomas Lawrence is quoted by Allan Cunningham in his *Life of Sir David Wilkie*. William Allan, the Scottish painter, had been the runner-up when Wilkins, the architect, was elected an Associate in November, 1823. Allan was now again a candidate and Wilkie was most anxious for, and confident of, the success of his fellow-countryman. Allan, however, was defeated by a large majority of votes—sixteen to seven—by a candidate who had had no support in previous elections but who was to figure prominently in the councils of the Royal Academy in the future.

This was William Etty, who had returned to London earlier

in the year from Italy. There he had made the acquaintance of Macready, the actor, who gives in his *Diary* an interesting glimpse of the young painter. Macready, travelling with a friend from Naples to Rome, found that a third seat in the carriage was occupied by "a short, thin young man with light hair, his face marked with the small-pox, very gentle in his manner, with a small and feeble tone of voice; whom we found a very agreeable and accommodating travelling companion, and in whom, through all his after-life, I found a very warm friend".

Etty, on his return to London, lived for a time in his former lodgings in Stangate Walk, Lambeth, close to the Surrey end of Westminster Bridge. Lambeth in 1824 was not the Lambeth of to-day, and the painter loved the locality and the rooms in which he lived. However at midsummer he removed to a house in Buckingham Street, Strand. He was induced to do this by his brother Walter, to whose generous assistance he owed much of his success. But leaving Lambeth cost Etty agonies, of which there is no hint in the placid account of his change of habitation given by Gilchrist in his life of the artist. Etty's unhappiness may be gauged, however, by the following pathetic letter to his brother, written soon after he left Lambeth:

14 Buckingham Street

Tuesday morning

June 29th, 1824

My dearest Walter

After all the trouble you have had and all the expense that has been incurred, it may seem like ingratitude and flying in your face, to feel as I do—but believe me I am here truly wretched. Could I have foreseen one quarter of the unhappy feeling that has possessed me and still paralyses me, I would never have thought of leaving a place where I was truly happy and healthy. Could I ever like this place equal to my last, which is impossible, the idea of the heavy expense weighs down my mind and utterly unnerves me.

Oh! forgive me, forgive me, I entreat you. I will never do anything to disgrace you or give you uneasiness after this, but I feel my happiness and health are gone; attached from the first to that dear place, where I have made some of my happiest efforts because my mind was at peace, and where I had an easy rent and a situation that could banish those clouds of melancholy that now hang over my mind, I feel that in leaving it, I have lost almost everything

dear to me except yourself. It was at a distance that insured my health, by rendering a walk to the Academy necessary, and surrounded by spacious gardens and the river the air is purer. I have scarcely had a night's rest since I have been here.

Let me go back, I entreat you! on my knees I would entreat you, to where I painted my Cleopatra, my Maternal Affection and my Pandora—there I can live, here I am dead to art and to everything, at an expense that I dread to contemplate.

I have no wish but to live and die in Lambeth, a name ever dear to me because I have been there truly happy, more so than I ever was or ever shall be again unless I go back. I don't want to live in splendour, I want to be great as a painter. Let me then go while it is in my power! I conjure you by the love I bear you, by all your desires for my welfare, for I fear the effects of a refusal. I feel sensible that it would have some bad effect on my health, which, God knows, is not strong, or what would be worse, my mind, which when so affected, is oppressed with a gloom indescribable.

Grant it me and I will yet live and be happy, and I trust to make you so too, at least I shall spare no pains to try and do so. Pity and forgive me, my dear Walter—I can't help it—, and believe me, ever your affectionate brother,

William Etty.

Despite the hopeless tone of this appeal, Etty was speedily reconciled to his new surroundings. He remained in Buckingham Street, with his niece as housekeeper, for nearly twenty-five years, and no painter ever lived a happier life than his during that period.

There is nothing of note in the Minutes of the Royal Academy this year, with the exception of the records of the presentation by Lady Chambers of a bust of her father, Joseph Wilton, R.A., by Roubiliac; and of the opening of a sealed packet deposited with the Council by Richard Payne Knight, the archaeologist and numismatist, who died in April, 1824. Of the latter the Minutes state:

In consequence of the decease of Mr Richard Payne Knight, the President and Council proceeded to open the paper placed in their keeping on the 15th of March, 1809, conformably with his directions. On examination of the same it proved to be Mr R. P. Knight's last will and testament, bearing date, 7th November, 1808, and devising to certain trustees for the benefit of the Royal Academy his house in Soho Square with everything there contained (certain enumerated articles excepted) and appointing his brother,

Mr Thomas Andrew Knight, sole executor. Resolved that a copy of the will be sent to Mr A. Knight, with a letter stating the circumstances under which it was deposited with the Royal Academy.

The reply of the executor was received promptly, and was disappointing. His brother, he said, made another will in 1814, leaving the property to the British Museum, instead of to the Royal Academy. To quote his brother's words this change was made: "Not from any feelings of diminished respect towards the Royal Academy, but solely because, under the arrangements made at the British Museum, subsequently to the date of his will of 1808, he thinks that his collections, being added to those of his late friends Mr Townley and Mr Cracherode, will be more useful to the members of the Royal Academy and to the Public". The Payne Knight collections acquired by the British Museum were said to be worth fifty thousand pounds.

## CHAPTER V

1825

FUSELI'S pictures have long since gone out of fashion, probably never to return, and some years ago one of them, of very large size, and framed—*The Flood*, ten feet by eight—was knocked down for a guinea at Christie's. Even in his own day his execution, and still more his colour—or rather want of colour—were constantly criticized. But as a designer his reputation was prodigious, and Lawrence, who was one of his most sincere admirers, mentions his ability in this respect in a letter written four days after Fuseli's death. The letter was addressed to Uwins, then in Rome, copying Michael Angelo's paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Lawrence says, after some remarks on Michael Angelo:

We have just sustained the loss of kindred genius, if not of greater, in the original and lofty conceptions of Mr Fuseli. In poetic invention it is not too much to say he has had no equal since the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and if his drawings and proportions were mannered and sometimes carried to excess, still it was exaggeration of the grandeur of antique form, and not—as in many—enlargement of the mean and ordinary in nature.

Blake was no less appreciative of Fuseli's qualities, as may be seen by an angry letter, published in the *Monthly Magazine* of June, 1806, written to protest against certain criticisms of the *Ugolino* (19), exhibited by Fuseli at the Royal Academy.

Fuseli died this year on April 16th, and the respect in which he was held by his brother artists and by the public at large was evidenced by his funeral, which was almost as imposing as that of Benjamin West, five years before. Fuseli was buried in St Paul's Cathedral, as West was, close to the grave of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Born in Switzerland, Fuseli had no national language, and

was, he declared, a foreigner in every country. But he was a capital linguist and spoke and wrote English, French, Italian and German, the last better than any. His English was astonishingly fluent, even in profanity, for his bad language was notorious, but disfigured always by a curious accent, which his sixty years' residence in this country did little to improve. His accent was the more unfortunate because in his capacity of Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy he was obliged to deliver lectures, and a reporter who attended one of them on behalf of a weekly journal in 1822 complained that he could not understand ten sentences. This, no doubt, was an exaggeration, for Fuseli's speech appears to have been intelligible except in occasional passages, and this was the opinion of an old student of the Royal Academy, who in 1840 contributed some recollections of his youth to the *Polytechnic Journal*. He speaks of Fuseli as "an accomplished scholar and a kind friend", gives a description of him when in the lecture room, and quotes a passage from one of his addresses exactly as he delivered it. The former Academy student says, writing fifteen years after Fuseli's death:

I behold him now in my mind's eye, snugly ensconcing himself in his upright lecture-cage, looking for all the world like an ancient watchman in his box, only having two lanterns instead of one. I see him now, turning a lozenge in his mouth by an effort which usually brought his lower lip in immediate contact with the tip of his nose, sipping from a glass of water, and beginning one of those beautiful discourses which found so few listeners among his brother Academicians, but not one word of which was lost by those who attended the lectures. It is true, however, that he must have been a Stoic who could forbear to smile at the pronunciation of such a dialect as the following, though he could not but admit the justice of the criticism:—"The magneefficence of Michael Angelo, the puerity of Raffaello, the splendour of Titiano may sookcessively command the wreverence of the stuedent, and excite emoolation of the accomplished pwractitioner in the same ratio as each should avoid the squabby excwrescenses of Wreubens or the fleemsy insoofficiency of Carlo Maratti".

The writer of this description of Fuseli as a lecturer was privileged more than once to watch him at work, and struggling with those murky tones from which he never could escape. He

admitted that he could not paint colour and had given up attempting to do so. "Oh," he said, "I have found *color* a coy meestress, so I left her."

Much has been said of the ghastly and terrifying nature of some of Fuseli's imaginings and of their supposed cause, and Allan Cunningham, in his brief life of the artist, says: "I know not whether it be true that Fuseli supped on raw pork the night before he began his picture of *The Nightmare*". The story about the raw pork has been told innumerable times, and believed by many who were unaware that the Swiss painter was one of the most abstemious of men, who enjoyed superb health throughout his long life, and to whom, probably, indigestion and its consequences were unknown. No writer on the artists of Fuseli's time has mentioned the source of the story in question, which originated, I believe, in a humorous paragraph that appeared in the *Public Advertiser* in 1790. The writer of the paragraph says, after praising the painter's imaginative powers:

But what makes this quality and the artist more singular, and induces us at present to mention it to our readers, is a circumstance not generally known, but which is equally interesting to the Poet, the Naturalist, and the Physician. It is a fact that this creative fancy springs solely from an *animal process*, and is brought about after regular intervals by Mr Fuseli's *eating raw pork for supper*. The fact of indigestion producing a strong effect on the imagination is fully ascertained. The monstrous forms which the latter brings in consequence are immediately sketched, and if necessary embodied on the canvas. This account, however it may border on the ludicrous, our readers may rely on as strictly founded on truth.

Fuseli was fortunate in his marriage. He lived for thirty-five years in perfect harmony with his wife, for whom he had "a sincere and delicate affection". But this did not prevent Cunningham from writing an objectionable paragraph about her, which was published in her lifetime. "In 1788", said Cunningham of Fuseli, "he married Sophia Rawlins, a young woman whom he first, it is said, employed as a model, and on whom, finding that her vocation had neither corrupted her heart nor rendered her cold in affection, he thought it no dishonour to

bestow his hand." This brought upon Cunningham a reproof from Miss Patrickson, a Scottish lady of his acquaintance, who had been the friend and admirer both of Fuseli and his wife. Writing to Cunningham, after the publication of the second volume of *British Painters*, she said: "One thing in your life of Fuseli gave me pain—what you term his wife's original 'vocation', of which I never heard the slightest hint, and which may lessen her in general estimation: and she is an excellent woman". The paragraph about Mrs Fuseli was omitted from later editions of *British Painters*. Fuseli left to his wife the whole of his property, amounting in value to about £6000.

The Royal Academy exhibition, which was opened a few days after Fuseli's interment at St Paul's, was, in the opinion of the critic of the *London Magazine*, better than any of its predecessors, more than half of which he claimed to have seen. This, however, was not the opinion of the Royal Academy's President, as Crabb Robinson tells us in his *Diary*. He was in the Athenaeum Club a day or two after the opening of the exhibition, when Lawrence and Dawson Turner came in, and, says Crabb Robinson:

They talked of the exhibition, Turner saying that it was superior to the time of Reynolds. This Sir Thomas Lawrence denied. He said two or three paintings by Sir Joshua, with one or two by Northcote or Opie, made an exhibition of themselves. In number there was now a superiority of good works. Both praised Danby's *Passage of the Red Sea*, and the landscape by Turner was highly extolled. Yet I have heard that he is going out of fashion. Sir Thomas mentioned that the Marquis of Stafford on seeing Danby's picture rode immediately to the artist and bought it for five hundred guineas. An hour afterwards Lord Liverpool was desirous of purchasing it.

Crabb Robinson, who himself went to the Academy on the following day, remarks of Turner's solitary exhibit: "He has a magnificent view of Dieppe. But if he has an atmosphere and play of colour all his own, why will he not assume a romantic name? No one could find fault with a Garden of Armida, or even of Eden, so painted. But we know Dieppe in the North of France, and can't easily clothe it in such fairy hues. I can understand why such artists as Constable and Collins are preferred".

Most of the newspaper critics praised Turner's view of Dieppe, but all thought the atmosphere too southern for truth. "This", said the *New Monthly Magazine*, "is perhaps the most splendid piece of falsehood that ever proceeded from the brush of Turner or any of his followers."

The picture by Danby which Crabb Robinson calls "Passage of the Red Sea", was the *Delivery of Israel out of Egypt*, a "grandly conceived" work in the opinion of *The Times*, and one that led, later in the year, to the bestowal of Academic honours on its young author.

Constable showed this year three pictures, to all of which, following the exasperating practice of Gainsborough, he gave the same title, *Landscape*. Of these the principal was No. 224, the canal scene, now at Burlington House and known to-day as *The Leaping Horse*, of which the *Literary Chronicle* says, after complaining of the paucity of landscapes in the exhibition: "But there is one (224) that is in itself a host—a meadow-scene on the banks of a canal, with willows and other trees; and it is a charming specimen of that fresh, verdant scenery peculiar to this country". The *Morning Chronicle* also praises No. 224, and describes one of Constable's other pictures as "A scene without any prominent features of the grand or beautiful, but with a rich, broken foreground sweetly pencilled, and a very pleasing and natural tone of colour throughout the wild green distance". *The Times* merely mentions Constable's name when noticing the exhibition, but there was one inspired prophet among the critics. This was the representative of the *European Magazine*, who says: "Constable in his peculiar and natural style is gradually rising to the head of his department. When his pictures receive the mellowing tint of time they will be inestimable".

An artist who increased his reputation immensely this year was Etty, whose large composition, *The Combat*, was the subject of extravagant laudation. According to *The Times*, it was "masterly"; the *Literary Gazette* "had little doubt that the works of Titian were on their first appearance what Mr Etty's are now"; and the *European Magazine*, "for the honour of England", wished

that the Old Masters could be challenged by hanging *The Combat* in one of the first galleries by the side of Titian and Paul Veronese. Nevertheless, *The Combat* found no purchaser at the Academy. It was bought after the close of the exhibition by the painter, John Martin.

Almost as much admired as the Etty was another very large work, Hilton's *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (105), which was bought by the Directors of the British Institution and by them presented in 1828 to St Peter's Church, Pimlico. Its subsequent history is interesting. St Peter's Church was burnt down in 1838, and Hilton's picture was only saved at the last moment by being cut out of the frame. Nearly forty years afterwards *Christ Crowned with Thorns* was bought (on the motion of Solomon Hart, R.A.) by the Council of the Royal Academy, and was the first work acquired under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest.

Although the pictures by Etty and Hilton were highly appreciated, both were outshone in popularity by one of Lawrence's portraits, *The Son of John George Lambton, Esq.* (288), that study of a little boy in crimson, seated on a rock, famous everywhere to-day as *Master Lambton*. The Hanging Committee of the exhibition, composed of George Jones, A. E. Chalon and Thomas Phillips, was reprovved in the press for the inferior position assigned to this portrait. It was hung, not in the Great Room, but in one of the smaller ones, the School of Painting, and even there, not upon what we call the line to-day. "Lawrence's pictures", says one of the protesting critics, "are not hung as they should be. Mrs Peel, as well as young Lambton, are completely destroyed by being at such a height." The beautiful portrait of Mrs Peel (afterwards Lady Peel) was hung above a doorway.

If the gossip of contemporary newspapers can be trusted, the hanging of his son's portrait gave great offence to Mr Lambton, who was extremely fond of pictures and a generous supporter of modern artists. Mr Lambton was a Whig in politics, and is said to have declared that as it was on that account (as he believed) that the portrait was put away in the ante-room, he would never buy another picture from a Royal Academician.

A writer in the *News of Literature and Fashion* says in a note on the exhibition:

Sir Thomas Lawrence had originally painted the boy in yellow, forgetting that everybody called his father "the yellow dandy". There's the song:—

Mr. Lambton leads the van,  
Pleasant fellow, pleasant fellow,  
Looking quite the gentleman,  
Rather yellow, rather yellow,—

So Lambton when he saw his boy in yellow was rather vexed, and he never ceased to torment Sir Thomas on the score of the unfitness of the colour, until he got it blotted out by the crimson.

Portraits at the Academy condemned by some of the critics included one by W. H. Pickersgill (354) of that ill-fated writer and poetess, Letitia E. Landon. "Pickersgill," said the critic of the *European Magazine*, "a man of undeniable talent, has one picture—Miss Landon—which is quite unworthy of him. He has made a modest and retiring young lady a virago-looking Amazon in a Spanish hat, which unquestionably the improvisatrice never wore; and although he has succeeded in communicating an idea of her talent, she may fairly complain that he has also succeeded in omitting every trait of her beauty." The same writer describes as a caricature the portrait of Sir Walter Scott painted by Stuart Newton in the autumn of 1824.

Of the portrait of Byron by Richard Westall (41) the *New Monthly Magazine* says: "The features, the general expression, the hair of the head and even the colour of the eyes, are all Mr Westall's and none of them Lord Byron's". Westall's portrait, painted many years before, and exhibited on this occasion on account of the recent death of the poet, was liked, however, by the Countess Guiccioli. In Byron's opinion, Westall's was the only portrait that did not make him more agreeable than nature, but he said nothing in its favour, which was to be expected from a man who declared painting to be "of all the arts the most unsympathetic, and unnatural, and that by which the nonsense of mankind is most imposed upon".

Byron appears to have disliked pictures, and still more the dealers in them, at an early age, if we may judge by one of his conversations with Sheldrake, the surgeon, when he was about nineteen or twenty. Sheldrake, who treated Byron for his lameness, which he believed he could have cured had it been taken in hand sufficiently early, says that, at one of their meetings:

He talked much and freely upon literary subjects, but expressed a settled determination never to take any steps towards forming a collection of pictures or other works of art. He said that all dealers in pictures, etc., made a strong push to get every young man of rank and fortune, when he first entered public life, into their snares that they might make him their dupe and plunder him of his property. He declared his belief that all such dealers, as well as gamblers of every kind, were complete scoundrels, whose object was fraud, and expressed his fixed determination never to have any dealings with them, a determination I believe he adhered to, during the whole of his life.

A picture that found many admirers at the Royal Academy was *The Travelling Druggist* (106), a highly-coloured work by Mulready, to which had been given the place above the mantel-piece in the Great Room; a place in which Wilkie's pictures had figured sometimes in that painter's more successful days. Wilkie, now ill and unable to work, and about to attempt to restore his shattered health by foreign travel, appears to have been forgotten by the fickle public of which he was once the idol. His single contribution, a small picture called *The Highland Family*, passed almost unnoticed by the press.

Samuel Palmer, though still under twenty, was exhibiting this year at the Academy for the sixth time. He was represented by two small landscapes, *A Scene from Kent* (384) and *A Rustic Scene* (410); probably the works mentioned in his note-books as painted on commission at seven guineas each, for a patron named Bennett. There is no description of these youthful performances in Palmer's life written by his son, but in view of his later work it is unlikely that they were altogether without merit. They were ridiculed, however, by the outspoken critic of the *European Magazine*, which in 1825 devoted an unusually large amount of

space to notices of the fine arts. The critic says, after mentioning the landscapes of Turner, Constable and others:

And there are two pictures by a Mr Palmer so amazing that we feel the most intense curiosity to see what manner of man it was who produced such performances. We think if he would show himself with a label round his neck, "The Painter of *A View in Kent*", he would make something of it at a shilling a head. What the Hanging Committee means by hanging these pictures without the painter to explain them is past our conjecture.

In a review of the exhibitions of the season, published in the *European Magazine* after the galleries were closed, the same writer made a violent attack on the recently-founded Society of British Artists, which had just held its second exhibition in Suffolk Street. He follows some comments on the Royal Academy by saying:

So much for the exhibition at Somerset House. A rival one has been got up in Suffolk Street. The project had its origin in mere silly and paltry pique—and like all such piques it has sufficiently punished itself already, for the speculation has been a losing one. The collections have been miserable; in the last exhibition some small pieces of dead game were good, but except them, the rest was trash not fit for a pawnbroker's auction room in rag-fair. Haydon was infamous, and Martin's picture of the Creation absurd beyond all conception. Yet these are the only clever men in the Suffolk Street Academy. We hope the foolish thing will be given up; that the few good pictures it can produce will in future grace the walls of Somerset House, to the exclusion of some bad compositions; and that the infinite number of the wretched painters will be saved the disgrace of exposing themselves in public by having the only receptacle where they could possibly be admitted closed against them.

The National Gallery, now a year old, was the subject in May of a surprising statement made by the Home Secretary, Peel (afterwards Sir Robert Peel) at the dinner of the Artists' Benevolent Fund. Peel, who was in the chair, proposed the health of the King, and after observing that His Majesty was a munificent promoter and an excellent judge of the arts, said, according to *The Times*: "He has recently given signal proof, both of his liberal encouragement of the arts and his superior taste and judgment in them, in the magnificent collection of paintings which he purchased out of his own private funds and presented to the nation". There was, of course, no foundation for this statement, which is

the more remarkable as coming from Peel, the friend of Sir Thomas Lawrence and himself an ardent collector of pictures. The King, though perhaps largely instrumental in bringing about the purchase of the Angerstein collection for the nation, found none of the money. No correction of the statement appeared in *The Times*.

At the beginning of July, an announcement was made of the purchase of a new picture for the National Gallery—the first work added to the Angerstein collection since it was acquired by the State. This new picture, a Correggio, *La Vierge au Panier*, was taken to Carlton House for the King's inspection the day after it was acquired. It was bought from the dealer Nieuwenhuys, who described it as formerly in the Royal collection in Madrid, from which it was obtained by "a Mr Wallis", who followed the armies in the Peninsular wars and acquired many fine works from Spanish collections, which he brought to England in 1813. Wallis, said Nieuwenhuys, could not find a purchaser in England for the Correggio, and it was sent back to the Continent and found a place in the collection of Monsieur Lapeyrière, the Receiver-General of Taxes of the Department of the Seine. It was afterwards acquired by Nieuwenhuys, who sold it to the National Gallery for £3800.

The "Mr Wallis" who followed the armies in Spain, at great risk, was George Augustus Wallis, the intrepid agent of William Buchanan, the London dealer. It was Buchanan by whom, in 1813, the Correggio was in vain offered for sale, "valued at two thousand guineas". Soon afterwards, when Buchanan's business in Oxendon Street was taken over by George Yates, he also failed to find a purchaser for the picture, which was offered to several collectors, including Penrice of Yarmouth. There were some in 1825 who remembered that the Correggio had been in England before, and perhaps confused it with a more doubtful work, another *Vierge au Panier*, also said to be by Correggio, which was exhibited in Bond Street in 1811.

Discussions in the newspapers concerning the price and the condition of the Correggio followed its exhibition at the National

Gallery, and both questions were revived in the following year, in May, by a correspondent of *The Times*. This correspondent, who signed himself "Peter Pepper", condemned the administration of the Gallery by the Trustees and the Keeper, William Segquier, and hinted that jobbery was connected with the purchase of the Correggio, "which certainly *was cooked*, and well cooked too". He continued:

That the picture is a true one there can be no doubt, and that it came from Madrid in the year 1813 is unquestionably true, but that the picture is in the same state now that it was then, is what I must most persistently deny.

When I first saw the picture at the house of the late Mr President West, I think about the year 1814, it possessed the genuine and delightful tone that time alone can give; but when it came back to England a second time I found that the spirit of Correggio had departed under the pangs of cleaning, and there remained but the body, of a leady-coloured hue. Notwithstanding this metamorphosis, however, the sale at Lapeyrière's was well got up; it was the second act of the farce of Antwerp, where the *Chapeau de Paille* was sold and run up by those who had previously bought it. It was indeed well managed. The French understand how to do these things.

Where Mr Segquier's optical or his reasoning faculties were on the occasion of the purchase of this picture, the world does not well understand, but that by his advice the large sum of £3,800 was given for a small picture, which a short time before had been sold for £1200, is pretty well ascertained. I ask of you, Mr Editor, to explain this enigma if you can? John Bull has a right occasionally to peep behind the scenes for he pays the piper.

Wilkie, who examined the little Correggio very carefully, was also of opinion that it had been over-cleaned. He said that it was "a true, but by no means a virgin, picture. It has the granular effect of rubbing all over".

To the letter in *The Times* no reply was made by the Trustees or Keeper of the National Gallery, who were to be arraigned in 1826, in a somewhat similar fashion, after the purchase of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* and other pictures from the collection of Thomas Hamlet the jeweller.

A new departure was made in 1825 by the Directors of the British Institution, whose summer exhibitions had hitherto been composed of the works of deceased artists. They decided that in

this year it should be an exhibition of the works of the best of the living artists, who should be asked to contribute, as far as possible, their most successful efforts, "in order to show to what eminence the living school has attained". The Directors, whose amateur hangers were probably alarmed at the prospect of arranging an exhibition to which it was expected that all the prominent artists in England would contribute, made an application to the Royal Academy for assistance. They begged that two of the members might be deputed to hang the exhibition, but the Academy Council, in a reply couched in the politest of terms, declined to interfere in the matter.

Constable mentions the scheme with approval in a letter to his friend Fisher. "The wise men of the Institution", he says, "offer a good thing. It is to receive pictures from living artists which are in private hands, to form an exhibition instead of the Old Masters." He tells Fisher that he intends to contribute, and he did so. The pictures he sent were *The White Horse* and *Flatford Mill*, both worthy enough representatives. Yet he received from the reviewer of the *London Magazine* a criticism almost as malignant, though not so scurrilous, as those which were to cause him so much trouble in later years. After remarking the entire unattractiveness of the landscapes by Daniell shown at the British Institution, the critic of the *London Magazine* continues:

In a different way Mr Constable is infinitely more wearisome. He seems to have a peculiar affection for the dullest of subjects and to be unable to quit them. If indeed he did, he would render them all alike by the sameness and peculiarity of his execution and colouring. Not one inch of repose is to be found anywhere. Plants, foliage, sky, timber, stone—everything—are all contending for individual notice; and all curled and insipid and powdered with white as if he had employed a dredging box in dusting a bed of cabbages or carrots. If we did not consider him hopeless, we would have been more particular, but this is a hand that cannot mend. There is no mind to guide it.

The writer of this paragraph must have been antagonistic personally to Constable, for in 1825 his pictures were attacked by no other critic. Most of the mentions of his work at this time were appreciative, although he was as yet a long way from being

a popular painter. That distinction was still reserved for men now almost forgotten. The *Monthly Magazine* published in May an article on the pictures at the Society of British Artists, and said that the strength of the exhibition was in its landscapes. "Though", continued the critic, "we cannot be so patriotically partial as to claim that we have yet actually produced a Claude (although we remember that we have had a Wilson) yet we have two landscape-painters living at this time whose names will shed a lasting lustre over the English School." The names of Turner and Constable, both in their prime in 1825, naturally suggest themselves, but the artists referred to were Glover and Hofland, whose work was eulogized in the *Monthly Magazine* in a review two and a-half columns in length.

Gainsborough's house and painting-room in Pall Mall were used for many purposes of exhibition after his death, until the building was acquired by the War Office in 1822. But Sir Joshua Reynolds' house in Leicester Square appears to have remained in private occupation until this year, when an exhibition was held there of "a Gallery of Portraits of eminent characters and celebrated persons", who had flourished since the time of Henry VII. Reviewers of the exhibition state that it was very interesting, although the portraits were for the most part without frames, and with the catalogue numbers marked with chalk in large figures on the corners. Sir Joshua's house afterwards became the headquarters of the Western Literary and Scientific Institution, which was founded this year under the patronage of Thomas Campbell and other prominent writers.

Another exhibition, opened in May, was of a huge picture of the Battle of Waterloo, painted by the Dutch artist, Pieneman. It was shown in a wooden building, erected for the purpose in Hyde Park, by special permission of the King but much to the annoyance of the English artists and a large section of the public. Pieneman, however, had a following, for the *Morning Post* mentioned among those present at his private view the Dukes of Wellington, Gloucester, Beaufort, Hamilton, Argyll, Bedford, Richmond and Brunswick. "To supply a place for this

exhibition," says the *Literary Gazette*, "Hyde Park has been twice invaded by the ugliest shapes of buildings. The encroachment near the Piccadilly corner was not consummated, but we have its successor now, in all the bulk of the disagreeable and paltry. Of such an erection in such a place, we would complain upon any occasion, but we complain more that the nuisance has been committed on behalf of a foreign artist, for which all the native genius of Britain might have prayed in vain." Another writer says of the picture that it is a miserable performance with the exception of the Duke of Wellington's portrait, and adds, unpatriotically, "London is sick to death of Waterloo".

An interesting link with the past was broken in September by the death of Sir Thomas Stepney, a Welsh baronet and Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York. Sir Thomas, who died in his sixty-fifth year, was the last male descendant of Vandyck in the direct line. He was the fifth baronet in descent from Sir John Stepney, who married Justina, Vandyck's daughter and heiress. Sir Thomas's sister married Joseph Gulston, the well-known eighteenth-century collector of engraved portraits, and Gulston's daughter was an artist and exhibited more than once at the Royal Academy. William Miller in his *Biographical Sketches*, published in 1826, gives the following interesting description of the then recently deceased descendant of the great painter:

By the death of Sir Thomas Stepney a vacuum will be felt by that class of loungers of the old school who at the meridian hour daily saunter on the steps of Brooks's club and its neighbouring pavement; and even the quiet, unknown but observant pedestrian, who periodically perambulates the district of the Court, will for a time be sensible of the absence of this original and eccentric character—so totally unlike the *cut* of the present day—whose constant habits had rendered his presence so familiar to him. This gentleman's person was as well-known in St James's Street as the golden cross on the top of St Paul's Cathedral, and it had not more variety in its appearance, for in summer or winter, in a black frost or a burning sun, it had the same thin covering. The print by Cruikshank after a full length sketch by Gillray—the only engraved portrait of Sir Thomas—is no caricature but faithfully represents his air, gait and invariable costume.

\* There were no elections of Royal Academicians in 1825, but three new Associates were admitted; and a Keeper and a Professor of Anatomy appointed in the places respectively of Fuseli and Sir Anthony Carlisle. Henry Thomson, the only candidate for the post, became the new Keeper of the Royal Academy; and in a contest for the Professorship of Anatomy, John H. Green defeated Charles Bell by fourteen votes to eight. Bell, who possessed exceptional qualifications for this post, had been an unsuccessful candidate when Carlisle was elected in 1808.

For the three Associateships the candidates were numerous, but undistinguished almost without exception, as the following list shows:

## PAINTERS

W. Delamotte	J. G. Strutt	S. W. Reynolds, jr.
George Beechey	H. Fradelle	William Corden
F. Danby	G. Hayter	H. P. Bone
W. Allan	John Laporte	W. J. Newton
Mather Brown	Adam Buck	W. C. Ross
J. Green	Michael Sharp	R. T. Bone
H. W. Burgess	John Linnell	H. P. Briggs
Cornelius Varley	Samuel Lane	J. J. Halls
John Boaden	John Simpson	Joseph Clover
J. Lonsdale	Denis Dighton	W. Whitaker
W. F. Witherington	F. Scarfe	James Ramsay
T. G. Wainwright	F. P. Stephanoff	E. D. Leahy

## SCULPTORS

J. Kendrick	Peter Rouw	R. W. Sievier
W. Behnes	W. Wyon	

## ARCHITECTS

J. Goldicutt	C. A. Busby.
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The first election resulted in the return of Danby, with Dighton second. Allan defeated Witherington in the second election, and Briggs defeated Beechey in the third. In each case the votes were nine for the successful candidate and seven for the second. No votes were given to Linnell, who was always unfortunate at Academy elections.

## CHAPTER VI

1826

AT the first meeting of the Council of the Royal Academy, on January 7th, the state of the famous cartoon by Leonardo da Vinci was discussed. The cartoon, which now hangs in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, was in a bad condition when, at some date unknown, it was first acquired by the Royal Academy. It was repaired in 1791 by John Inigo Richards, R.A., but now required further attention, and at the meeting of January 7th it was resolved, "That the drawing by Leonardo da Vinci be entrusted to Mr R. R. Reinagle for the purpose of putting it in repair". Reinagle undertook the task, and six weeks later the Secretary was instructed by the Council to thank him for the trouble he had taken. But there was no suggestion of remuneration, as there had been in the case of Richards, who was voted an honorarium of twelve guineas when he performed a similar task.

On February 10th the Academicianships made vacant by the deaths of Dance, Owen and Fuseli were filled up, and once again Constable fared disastrously in the elections. The successor to Dance was William Wilkins the architect, a Cambridge man and a wrangler, and the first member of a University to be elected an Academician. Wilkins was elected by seventeen votes to ten for Leslie. One vote was given for Etty. In the contest for Owen's seat, Leslie defeated H. W. Pickersgill by twenty-one votes to six. Etty again had one vote and Constable two. In the third election, Pickersgill defeated Etty by sixteen votes to eleven and Constable received one vote.

Henry William Pickersgill, who found more supporters at the Academy elections than either Constable or Etty, was a portrait painter of moderate abilities who was fortunate enough to

number among his sitters Wordsworth, Robert Stephenson, Sir Richard Owen, Jeremy Bentham, Hannah More and Talfourd. In 1831 he was asked to paint Fanny Kemble, and consented gladly, for the actress was then immensely popular and a successful portrait of her would have increased his reputation considerably. Unfortunately Fanny Kemble allowed Mrs Jameson, the art critic, to accompany her on the occasion of the first sitting, and that lady, who was an artist herself in a small way, was so ill-mannered as to make comments on Pickersgill's work as it proceeded. This went on until the exasperated painter went so near to telling Mrs Jameson to mind her own business, that Fanny Kemble declined to sit further, and the portrait was never finished. Mrs Jameson, later on, treated Haydon in the same way, and caused him to fail with a portrait of Lady Byron.

The exhibition at the British Institution this year was remarkable for containing the first pictures shown in England by Richard Parkes Bonington. This brilliant young man, trained in France, where he had already made a reputation, sent to the British Institution two landscapes somewhat similar in motive—No. 242, *Coast Scenery*, and No. 256, *French Coast with Fisherman*. It has been said of the exhibition of these pictures at the British Institution that the critic of the *Literary Gazette* declared that there was no artist named Bonington and that they were the work of William Collins, R.A.

This story, which is of respectable antiquity, has been retold in modern times by F. G. Stephens, by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and by M. Dubuisson, the writer of the latest biography of Bonington, but there is not a word of truth in it. The critic of the *Literary Gazette* was not so foolish as to credit William Collins with the authorship of pictures completely unlike that artist's style. It was thus that he welcomed the newcomer:

No. 256. *French Coast with Fisherman*. R. P. Bonington. Who is R. P. Bonington? We never saw his name in any catalogue before and yet here are pictures which would grace the foremost name in landscape art. Sunshine, perspective, vigour; a fine sense of beauty in disposing of colour, whether in masses or mere bits. These are extraordinary ornaments to the rooms. Few

pictures have more skilfully expressed the character of open, sunny daylight than the one under notice; and we have seldom seen an artist make more of the simple materials which the subject afforded. With a broad pencil he has preserved the character of his figure and accessories; also a splendid tone of colour, glowing and transparent.

Bonington's landscapes found not only praise but purchasers at the British Institution. The larger work, *French Coast with Fisherman*, was bought by the Countess de Grey; the *Coast Scene*, a picture of children on the shore with carts and boats in the distance, by Sir George Warrender.

Callcott, Shee and Jackson were the hangers at the exhibition of the Royal Academy, at which Lawrence figured prominently. His portraits of Canning (hung above the mantelpiece in the Great Room), Peel, Lady Wallscourt, Lady Lansdowne, and Mrs Hope, were all centres of attraction. The last-named of the portraits made the strongest appeal to the popular taste on account of its gorgeous colour. For Lawrence had painted his sitter wearing a gown of the richest red, with many jewels and a gold-embroidered turban. Lawrence's portraits were not always praised for resemblance, but one of the critics says of that of Lady Lansdowne: "It is so like that when we met her Ladyship in the School of Painting, we thought her picture had walked from its frame". A painter's opinion of the exhibition is given in the following letter of June 26th, 1826, written by Haydon's pupil, William Bewick, to his wife:

The most striking picture in the collection is that of Mr Canning, by Sir Thomas Lawrence. There is one of the King, by whom I don't know. It is wretched, the sign over Mr Scott's door is as well painted and more kingly in appearance. It offers a striking contrast to the masterly portrait of Canning. Mr Haydon has two pictures in the exhibition, neither of them very good. I was disappointed in them. Mr Wilkie is at Venice and has nothing. The best landscape, or what comes nearest to pleasing nature, is by a Mr Constable. The great Turner has two. Neither is to my taste but still they are grand. Mr Briggs has two of the best historical pictures, and a Mr Etty one of the Choice of Paris. Mr Callcott, Mr Collins, and Mr Mulready have good pictures.

Turner had three pictures, not two only as Bewick thought,

and Constable said that his work had never given him so much pleasure—or so much pain—before. He thought that Turner's pictures were much too yellow, and so did most of the critics. "Sir Thomas Lawrence", said Constable in a letter to Archdeacon Fisher, "is very superior to himself in Peel and Canning. But above all the harmony of sound and colour, hangs a most atrocious portrait of the King, hideous to behold and of immense dimensions. Its appearance spoils the exhibition. It is done by some Irish fellow who has influence at Court." Concerning the portrait of the King abused by Constable and Bewick I shall have more to say in a later chapter.

The principal work shown by Constable this year at the Academy was that famous landscape, *The Cornfield*, the best known of his works, and one which he painted with interest and pleasure. "It occupied me wholly," he said, "I could think of and speak to no one." The newspapers did not take much notice of the picture but all that they said of it was in its praise. *The Times* critic wrote: "The best landscapes, beyond all comparison, in the exhibition, are from the pencil of Mr Constable. One of them, No. 225, is singularly beautiful and not inferior to some of Hobbema's most admired works". No. 225 was *The Cornfield*, described in the catalogue only as *Landscape*, for the present title was not given to the picture until 1838. No writer on Constable, I think, has remarked that *The Cornfield*, as it hangs to-day in the National Gallery, is considerably smaller than it was when shown at the Academy of 1826. It was exhibited in the following year at the British Institution, and its measurements are given in the catalogue as five feet ten inches by five feet three inches. The picture's present size, according to the National Gallery Catalogue, is four feet eight inches by four feet.

When Constable sent *The Cornfield* to the British Institution he altered the title, and it figures in the catalogue as *Landscape, Noon*, with the following quotation from Thomson's *Seasons*:

A fresher gale  
 Begins to wave the woods and stir the stream,  
 Sweeping with shadowy gusts the fields of corn.

There is nothing in these lines, or in any of Constable's remarks on the picture, to suggest that he intended it as a representation of showery weather, as Thackeray appears to have regarded it. Thackeray, who was a great admirer of Constable, said of *The Cornfield* and its painter in 1850:

This beautiful piece of autumn seems to be under the influence of a late shower; the shrubs, trees and distance are saturated with it. . . . As one looks at this delightful picture, one cannot but admire the manner in which the specific character of every object is made out: the undulations of the ripe corn, the chequered light on the road, the freshness of the banks, the trees and their leafage, the brilliant clouds artfully contrasted against the trees, and here and there broken by azure.

Not fairly appreciated during his lifetime, every succeeding year adds to the admiration of this great genius. Before he was admired as he deserved to be among ourselves, the Parisian painters had greatly and justly appreciated him, and he was as much the originator of the modern French landscape as Scott was the father of French romance.

The scene of Constable's *Cornfield* lies between East Bergholt and Dedham, but it would be difficult now to trace its exact situation. The *Art Journal* published in 1869 an article on *The Cornfield*, with some conjectures as to the position of the original, and this called forth the following interesting letter, addressed to the Editor by the painter's son:

68 Hamilton Terrace  
St John's Wood.

Sir

I have only just seen the *Art Journal* for January, and read the notice of the *Cornfield*, painted by my father. I agree with you as to the *Cornfield* being "somewhat of a misnomer", for the reasons stated in your notice. I would rather it had been called "A Suffolk Lane". It was taken in the lane leading from East Bergholt (my father's native village) to the pathway to Dedham across the meadows, a quarter of a mile from East Bergholt Church, and one mile from Dedham Church, as the crow flies. The little church in the distance never existed; it is one of the rare instances where my father availed himself of the painter's license to improve the composition. Dedham Church has a much larger tower and lies to the right hand, outside the limits of this picture. The scene is greatly changed now; all the large trees on the left were cut down some years ago.

C. G. Constable.



*From the painting in the National Gallery*

THE CORNFIELD

By John Constable, R.A.



The National Gallery and its affairs were again the subjects of correspondence and discussion in the newspapers, in connection with the purchase in the spring of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* and two other pictures. They were purchased from Thomas Hamlet the goldsmith, who had owned the Titian for twelve or thirteen years and had been very generous in lending it for exhibition, and also to the Royal Academy for the students to copy. Hamlet was supposed to be a very wealthy man, and some surprise was expressed that he should have wished to part with his pictures.

The purchase of them—the Titian, Nicholas Poussin's *Bacchanalian Festival*, and Annibale Carracci's *Christ appearing to Peter*—was announced in Parliament on March 23rd, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said the pictures were then on view at the Gallery, and mentioned as an indication of their value that the late Mr Angerstein had once offered £5000 for the Titian alone. The Government had paid £9000 for the three. No comments were made in Parliament on the Chancellor's statement, but a letter appeared in *The Times* on the same day, signed "Alfred", in which the administration of the National Gallery was again strongly criticized. The writer declared that the Managing Committee was composed of ciphers, with the exception of Sir Charles Long, and the Keeper, William Seguiet, whom he called "the picture-cleaner". "These", said "Alfred", "are the absolute rulers of the Gallery, and the others give way to them. Lord Aberdeen is an amiable and accomplished nobleman, but submissive to the superior cunning of Sir Charles Long. Sir George Beaumont talks too much, to think upon any subject, and Sir Thomas Lawrence is so accustomed to 'exactly so', that he has lost all recollection of negatives, especially in the presence of one who pretends to the exclusive ear of Majesty."

Sir Charles Long was the man in whose presence Lawrence forgot the use of negatives. He was very intimate with George IV, who often consulted him before buying pictures, and "Alfred" was not far wrong in supposing that he and Seguiet between them ruled the National Gallery.

The letter which "Alfred" contributed to *The Times* contained,

besides personalities, a reference to "the jobbing going forward" at the National Gallery. No doubt it was read by Joseph Hume, for on the following day the Radical member for Aberdeen reopened in the House of Commons the question of the purchase of Mr Hamlet's pictures. "Mr Hume said that he was assured things were not altogether right with regard to this picture speculation. From what he had heard, it was pretty clear that certain individuals were implicated in palming these pictures on to the Government." But after the Chancellor had defended the purchases, the matter was allowed to drop, although "Alfred" in a second letter published in *The Times*, valued the Titian at £4000 and the Poussin at £500, and declared that the Carracci should not have been bought at all.

The newspapers of 1826 record the addition of the three pictures to the collection in Pall Mall, but I have seen few comments on them, and these only in connection with alterations said to have been made to the Titian after its arrival in England. There appear to have been suspicions that the *Bacchus and Ariadne* had been tampered with recently and in parts repainted. The *New Monthly Magazine* said of it: "This picture is not what we remember it to have been, when exhibited a few years ago at the British Institution. It appears to have been experimented upon, yet with this drawback it is a splendid piece of colouring. The figure of Bacchus, however, borders upon the ridiculous".

More remarkable to those who know the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, as it hangs to-day in the National Gallery, is a description of the picture published a week or two after it had been placed on view in Pall Mall. This description was written by the representative of the *News of Literature and Fashion*, a journal that made a feature of information about art. He says on April 15th:

We paid a visit a few days ago to the National Gallery, to view the pictures recently purchased for the sum of £9000. The Titian is the largest as well as the best, we therefore take that first. The subject is Bacchus leaping from his car to meet Ariadne. The general tone is good, but the individual colour, especially in the principal figure, we have no hesitation in declaring positively



*From the painting in the National Gallery*

BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

By Titian



bad. The stripes of absolute blue which must be observed in the whole of the figure of Bacchus—intended for greys, and which we have no doubt were very beautiful when first painted—so predominate that we really could hardly bring ourselves to look sufficiently at it, to form a correct judgment. The body appears bruised, we had almost said in a state of putrefaction. Then the Ariadne, a misshapen little hussey, who has thrown two pieces of drapery over the shoulder, in the most inelegant manner that can be conceived—the blue is still much too powerful in her flesh, but there is a blue portion of her drapery which conceals it in a great measure.

The best part of the picture at present is a little satyr trailing along a calf's head; it is exceedingly well-conceived and beautifully painted, as is indeed, the whole of the picture. But the real truth is that the *Bacchus and Ariadne* has had a great many tricks played with it.

When at Rome it was considered a fine picture, but exceedingly brown. When it came to England it was cleaned *so effectually* as to have become a perfectly blue picture, and now it has relapsed into dinginess again. The figure of the Bacchus was most exquisitely painted and coloured; now the colour is decidedly bad. Who the culprits are who have called up Titian from the dead to retouch his picture we cannot say. But we must and do say that notwithstanding the high praise lavished on the pictures by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr Peel, more than double their value has been given for the three.

It is curious that Passavant, who saw the picture at the National Gallery in 1831, says of it in his *Tour of a German Artist in England*, "I am quite sorry to add that this picture is partially obliterated, especially in the upper part of the figure of Bacchus". But Waagen, who visited the National Gallery four years later, makes no comment on the condition of the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, on which he bestows nothing but praise.

The representative of the *News of Literature and Fashion* revisited the National Gallery, after the publication of the article from which I have quoted, and after another examination of the Hamlet pictures, expressed the opinion that together they were worth only £3000. As a matter of fact their purchase at £9000 was one of the best bargains ever made by the Government on behalf of the National Gallery, for the present worth of the *Bacchus and Ariadne* can hardly be overestimated. It is probably one of the most valuable works of art in the world.

While the discussion about the Hamlet pictures was in progress, the National Gallery received a further acquisition in the shape of Sir George Beaumont's collection, which, as he had promised, he gave to the nation, now that a gallery had been provided for them. But the gallery was a very poor one, as *The Times* remarked in the following paragraph, when commenting on Sir George's generous gift:

The whole of the present which Sir George Beaumont has made to the nation is a highly valuable one and will entitle him to the thanks of this age, and perhaps to more of those which shall succeed it. We are nevertheless obliged to express our regret that after so much has been said by the persons entrusted with the management of this institution, as it at present exists, something more has not been done to provide a fit place for viewing the pictures which we already possess, and forming what might with true propriety be called a National Gallery. A bad light and a most inconvenient set of rooms are allowed to act as drawbacks upon the advantages which might be derived from the public exposition of even the few pictures which at this moment compose our national collection.

Sir George Beaumont's motive in bestowing his collection on the nation is explained in an interesting letter to John Taylor, the former Editor of the *Sun*, who had written some congratulatory *Lines to Sir George Beaumont on his splendid contribution of Pictures to the National Gallery*, and was preparing for publication his *Poems on various subjects*. Sir George wrote to Taylor as follows:

Grosvenor Square

May 26, 1826

My dear Sir

I must thank you for your elegant but too partial lines, which would give me still greater pleasure, could I flatter myself I deserve all you have had the kindness to think I merit. As to my gift of the pictures, more credit is given me by my friends than I have any right to claim. I have many years had this object in view, and only waited for the opportunity. For my own part I sincerely wish every genuine and pure picture by the classics of the art were destined to be placed in this asylum. For had not this institution taken place I am satisfied that in less than another century not one of the works of the celebrated masters would have remained in an uninjured state—and then what must have been the fate of the Art?

You may form an idea of this by considering what would be the consequence

to poetry were Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, etc., entirely lost, or so mutilated and maimed that they would rather misguide than instruct the poets of succeeding ages. Both arts must have begun again, and I see no reason to flatter ourselves that they would arrive again to the same pitch of perfection. At least, ages must pass before it could reasonably be expected. This at least is my view of the subject, and I could not have satisfied myself without having done all in my power to prevent such a catastrophe. But I have taken up more of your time than I intended.

I shall only add that when your proposals are issued, I shall with great pleasure add the names of Lady Beaumont and myself to the list of your subscribers, and wishing you all the success which you or your friends can imagine,

I remain, Dear Sir,

Faithfully yours

G. H. Beaumont.

The same views about the preservation of his pictures were expressed by Sir George in a letter to his friend Lord Dover. He says, after speaking of the harm that had already been done by the cleaning of old pictures:

My idea therefore is that the few examples that remain perfect can never be so safe as under the guardianship of a body which "never dies", and I see every year such proofs of the carelessness with which people suffer these inestimable relics to be rubbed, scraped and polished, as if they were their family plate, that I verily believe if they do not find some safe asylum, in another half century little more will be left than the bare canvas.

To judge by the following advertisement, published in the *Morning Post* of May 22nd, 1834, some owners of collections at this period must have kept a resident cleaner of the kind Sir George Beaumont dreaded, one who could "rub and scrape and polish" the family pictures, and fill up his time with odd jobs. The advertiser's claim to be able to repair gilt work suggests that he had been in the employment of a picture framer:

A Person experienced in picture cleaning, and also cleaning, repairing and keeping gilt work in proper order is desirous of obtaining a situation with a Nobleman or Gentleman, and being a married man would have no objection to keep the Lodge. Apply by letter, post-paid, to W. W., at J. Langley's, Grocer and Tea Dealer, St Paul's Churchyard.

Sir George might not have been so anxious to place his treasures in the "safe asylum" of the newly-founded National Gallery, if he could have foreseen the judgment of painters of the succeeding generation upon the way in which one of them had been treated. About twenty-five years after the Beaumont presentation certain of the pictures in the collection were cleaned, and evidence as to the damage they sustained in the process was given by several artists before the Select Committee appointed in 1853 to enquire into the affairs of the National Gallery. One of the Beaumont pictures cleaned was the well-known *View in Venice* by Canaletto, which, in the opinion of David Roberts, R.A., had been so seriously injured in the process that its whole harmony was destroyed. "There is", said Roberts, "part of a wooden shed in this picture, which has a row of tiles upon it, that appears to have been scrubbed to such an extent that the paint is taken off altogether." The opinion of David Roberts about the Canaletto was supported more or less by Alfred Stevens, Sir Edwin Landseer and Clarkson Stanfield.

Almost all the pictures of value in the collection of Sir George Beaumont were included in his gift to the National Gallery; even the fine landscape by Rubens, *Autumn, the Château de Steen*, which Lady Beaumont, many years before, had bought from William Buchanan for £1500, in order that she might present it to her husband. The Rembrandt, *A Jew Merchant*; several Claudes, and two Wilsons were other works presented, and what it cost the donor to part with them can hardly be imagined. He loved them as few men have loved pictures, they were part of his life, and when he made his self-sacrificing gift, he was seventy-four years old. Always an industrious amateur painter, he covered some of the bare spaces on his walls with landscapes from his own brush, and endeavoured to forget their predecessors.

It was in vain, and he soon realized that he could not live without one of the pictures, at least, that he had sent away, the little Claude, once known as *Hagar and the Angel*, but now called *The Annunciation*, No. 61 in the National Gallery Catalogue. This

was the picture he loved most of all and from which until now he had not been separated for years. "He dealt with it", said his friend Lord Monteaule, "almost as a man might deal with a child he loved. He travelled with it, carried it about with him, and valued it beyond any picture he had." The *Annunciation* was returned to him at his earnest request and it remained in his possession until his death, when Lady Beaumont restored it to the National Gallery.

The *Annunciation* was the first picture by Claude seen by Constable, who, at some unknown date, made a fine copy of it. This copy was mentioned when the condition of the *Annunciation* and the other Beaumont Claudes was discussed by the Select Committee of 1853. It then belonged to a member of the Committee, Mr Marshall, and was described as having been painted by Constable "some years before his death", and as "one of the most beautiful copies that exist in the world". It is known that Constable copied this Claude about 1799, but he was then far from being expert as a painter. Mr Marshall's version must have belonged to a much later period, and was probably the copy included in Constable's sale after his death, "No. 48, *Hagar and the Angel*, from the original by Claude in the National Gallery". This copy was sold for £53. 11s.

The summer exhibition at the British Institution was of the first importance. It was composed of all the pictures from Carlton House, a hundred and sixty-four in number, lent for the purpose by the King. With the opening of this exhibition, the rumour was revived that His Majesty intended to present his collection to the nation. "It is said", remarked one writer, in circulating this story, "that the Royal donor, with a delicacy which does him at least as much honour as his munificence, declined sending these pictures until after Sir George Beaumont's had been hung up, lest they should obtain an undue preference in situation." This rumour was as groundless as another which credited the King with the intention of purchasing, for ten thousand guineas, a life-size painting, *Lady Godiva of Coventry*, which was on view in April and May at No. 24 Royal Arcade,

Pall Mall. The picture was advertised extensively, and the proprietor, in some of his announcements, protested against certain newspaper criticisms, and assured ladies that "this splendid painting" contained nothing that might not be promiscuously viewed in public by all. On April 15th, *The Times* published an indignant paragraph, contradicting the rumours about the King and protesting against the insolence of connecting his name with such a vulgar work. The name of its painter was not mentioned in *The Times* or in any of the advertisements of the picture, in some of which an attempt was made to suggest a Royal connection by stating that Godiva's horse was "selected from the Royal stud".

In the auction room the year was uneventful, so far as the disposal of important or valuable pictures was concerned. But one sale in the summer is worth recording, because it included a large number of works by an eighteenth-century painter whose portraits are now steadily rising in value. The artist was Joseph Highmore, a favourite pupil of Kneller, and the sale that of Sir Walter Stirling, Bart., who lived at No. 105 Pall Mall, a house that was afterwards used as a temporary National Gallery. The sale of its contents by Robins commenced on July 12th, and lasted eight days, and the catalogue shows that Sir Walter must have had a particular admiration for the work of Highmore. No fewer than twenty-two pictures and portraits from the brush of this artist came under the hammer, and, in view of his increasing importance in the sale-room, I give the titles of them all. That some were copies is apparent from the following list:

- (28) Mother of William III, in a tawney-coloured gown and blue scarf.
- (34) Sir George Robinson in armour with right hand upon his helmet.
- (78) Portrait of a Sculptor.
- (87) Portrait of a Lady seated, habited in white satin.
- (88) A ditto of the Duke of Marlborough in armour, a small whole-length.
- (89) A ditto of King William.
- (90) A ditto of the Duchess of Cleveland.
- (91) A ditto—The Physician to George the First.
- (92) A fine painting of Christ with the Disciples at Emmaus.

- (93) A portrait of Prothonotary Bonnot with a sword in his hand, half-length size.
- (94) A ditto of Lord Chancellor Trevor in his robes, with a roll of paper in his hand, half-length size.
- (106) A half-length portrait of a Lady.
- (107) A ditto of two children.
- (108) Ditto of a Lady with a Plume of Feathers in her head.
- (109) A whole-length portrait of a young Lady with a Dog by her side.
- (208) A portrait of a Lady in Blue.
- (209) A Ditto, Lady with a Greyhound.
- (210) A Ditto, a Gentleman with a Book in his hand.
- (235) A portrait of the Earl of Aylesbury.
- (236) The Virgin and Child with St John, after Raphael.
- (237) Portraits of the two children of Charles the First, with a dog.
- (241) A portrait of James Bertie, Lord Norrie, habited in armour.

At the beginning of November, Sir Thomas Lawrence had intended to take to the King for signature, the diplomas of the three newly elected Academicians, Wilkins, Leslie and Pickersgill. But a sudden indisposition prevented him from executing this duty, and instead of taking the diplomas in person he sent them to one of the Lords-in-Waiting, whom he asked in an accompanying letter to endeavour to obtain the signatures. Lawrence concluded his letter by saying: "I have embraced the occasion which this duty has created to send for His Majesty's benign acceptance, a portrait painted by me in early life of the late Princess Amelia. I was honoured by her Royal Highness with sittings for it about 1790".

To this portrait of the youngest child of George III, a story attaches. It is a half-length and was painted when the Princess was a little girl of seven. Lawrence sent it to the Royal Academy in 1790, and it was exhibited there—No. 26, *Portrait of her Royal Highness, Princess Amelia*. After the close of the exhibition it went to Windsor and remained there for several years. Then it disappeared, no one knows how, and nothing more was seen of it until 1825, when it figured in a sale at Foster's auction rooms in Pall Mall and was knocked down for a small sum. Lawrence when he heard that the portrait had been sold was most anxious

to obtain it with a view to restoring it to the Royal collection. He offered to paint Mrs Foster's portrait if the auctioneer could trace and recover that of the Princess. Foster was successful in his quest and Lawrence duly fulfilled his promise.

A few days after sending the portrait of the Princess to the King, Lawrence presided at the election of two Associates of the Royal Academy. The first chosen was Edwin Landseer, who received fourteen votes against thirteen given to the architect, John Peter Gandy. Landseer, who was in his twenty-fifth year, was one of the youngest Associates elected since the alteration in the laws of the Royal Academy by which candidates younger than twenty-four were excluded. Gandy was successful in the second contest, in which he defeated Gilbert Stuart Newton, but his victory was not well received by the press, for little was known of his qualifications. The *Examiner* said, when recording the elections:

Every admirer of art knows well what Mr Edwin Landseer is and what *he* can do; and Mr J. P. Gandy may also be a highly meritorious artist, but what has he *done* to deserve this highly honourable distinction? We had hoped that the spirit of intrigue by which the Royal Academy was once so disgracefully distinguished, had subsided, but we suspect there is still something crooked in its management.

The story of John Peter Gandy in its connection with the Royal Academy is not unlike that of Richard Cook. Gandy, who was the younger brother of Joseph Gandy, A.R.A., worked for a time with William Wilkins, R.A., but the only building of importance he appears to have designed unaided was Exeter Hall, in the Strand. In 1827, the year after his election as an Associate, he came into considerable property, changed his name to Deering, and virtually retired from his profession. Yet eleven years afterwards, when three Academicians were elected on the same night, Deering was the first chosen, and by a large majority of votes. His election is attributed to "wealth and influence", in the sketch of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. However, Deering was remarkable for one thing. He was the only man who has been at the same time a member of Parliament and

a member of the Royal Academy. He was returned for the borough of Aylesbury in the first reformed Parliament.

During the late autumn the Royal Academy lost three of its members, George Garrard, A.R.A., William Ward, A.R.A., and John Flaxman, R.A. Ward and Garrard both died suddenly, and Flaxman after a very brief illness. Garrard practised principally as a sculptor, although he began as a painter and with some success. Sir Joshua Reynolds bought one of his earlier pictures. A critic of the Academy exhibition of 1784 notices Garrard's *View of a Brewhouse Yard* (29), and says, "We hear Sir Joshua has, to encourage the rising merit of the artist, made a purchase of this work". Two years later the critic of the *Public Advertiser* recalls Sir Joshua's purchase, when paying a compliment to a picture by Garrard in the exhibition of 1786. He says on May 4th: "Garrard's *Portraits of Horses at a Farrier's Shop* tho' almost adjoining to Gilpin, suffers not by the comparison with Gilpin and Stubbs. The farrier's shop is a worthy successor to the brewer's dray, and we hope it will be advanced to equal honour. More it cannot have, for the brewer's dray was bought by Sir Joshua and is in his collection".

But Garrard, in spite of his early success, did nothing afterwards as a painter and very little as a sculptor. He made plans for ambitious works in bronze and marble but not one of them was executed. Lord Egremont, who patronized him, gave him many minor commissions, and casts from some of his models of animals are still to be seen at Petworth. Garrard died at Brompton, on the morning of Sunday, October 8th, when kneeling at prayer with his assembled family.

William Ward, the engraver, elder brother of James Ward, R.A., and brother-in-law of George Morland, died on December 1st as suddenly as Garrard. He rose at the ordinary time, awakened his family, and returned to his room to dress. "As he did not come down to breakfast his daughter went up to call him. She found him lying on the floor, quite dead, but with a smile on his face that made her imagine for the moment that he was still alive." It is William Carey who tells us this, in some

notes on William Ward contributed to the *Repository of Arts* not long after his death. Carey, who had known Ward since he was the apprentice of John Raphael Smith, gives the following interesting description of the relations between the two men, and of the way in which the pupil helped the master :

Under such a master as Smith, Ward made a steady progress. He completed the time of his apprenticeship with credit to himself and great profit to his master. He was then engaged by Smith at a liberal salary and continued for some years to execute the chief part of that artist's plates, who, after working a little on each, had his name, according to the custom of the day, engraved under them and published them as his own performances. Of the prints finished in this way, that most beautiful mezzotinto of the Bacchante from Sir Joshua Reynolds' excellent picture of Lady Hamilton was one.

I saw William Ward at work on that plate from day to day until he had brought it to a proof ready for publication. Nothing could be more charming in its class than this print. Smith expressed his high admiration for it, but he took the tool in his hand, worked on the plate for little more than a couple of hours, sent it to the writing engraver and published it as his own. This was not deemed by Ward any unfairness, nor is it here noticed as such. It was an act in strict conformity with their special contract.

Carey says that Ward was of a tranquil, domestic disposition, and never in the least corrupted by the example of his brother-in-law, George Morland. He was very strict in his views of propriety, as the following anecdote shows :

He had engraved a splendid mezzotint from Hoppner's masterpiece, *The Sleeping Nymph*, in Lord de Tabley's gallery. The plate was his own and the impression in full sale, when it struck his conscience that he ought to suppress it. He called in all the impressions from the print shops and refused any applications for further sales.

By the death of Flaxman, only six days after that of Ward, the Royal Academy lost one of its most distinguished members and its first Professor of Sculpture. There were Professors of Painting, Architecture, and Perspective, from the time of the Academy's foundation, but the Professorship of Sculpture remained unfilled until Flaxman was appointed in 1810. He was conscientious as a Professor as he was in everything, and only failed to deliver his lectures when unavoidably prevented, as on one occasion in the

year before his death, when he made his excuses to the President in the following letter:

7 Buckingham Street  
Fitzroy Square.

February 21, 1825.

Dear Sir Thomas,

A fall on Tuesday last will, by its consequence, prevent me from appearing before you next Monday, to deliver the first lecture on sculpture. But as, thank God, I am recovering, I hope to be more equal to the exertion on the following Monday, of which I will give the Secretary notice. I have the honour to remain, dear Sir Thomas,

Your much obliged servant

John Flaxman.

Flaxman, who died in his seventy-second year, was born at York in 1755, and brought to London when an infant by his father, who was a figure-moulder, who worked for Roubiliac and other sculptors of the period, and afterwards kept a shop in the Strand, where he sold plaster casts. The elder Flaxman's stock was disposed of in 1803 and his catalogue shows that it contained in No. 23, *A Horse (Gainsborough's)*, a cast of great interest that is now unobtainable. It was the horse mentioned in the biographical sketch of Gainsborough, published in the *Morning Chronicle* on the day the painter was buried at Kew. The writer says of his early work in London: "There is a cast in the plaister shops from an old horse that he modelled, which has peculiar merit". George Morland, when a boy, had a cast of Gainsborough's horse and made several copies of it. Flaxman's father was devoted to his son, who was always delicate and without his aid would have died in childhood. Flaxman tells William Hayley of this, in a hitherto unpublished letter written to encourage him when the poet's son was dangerously ill in 1798:

When I was ten months old, my relations believed that I had died of a disorder with which I had been sorely afflicted for some time, and I was accordingly laid out with halfpence on my eyes, and covered with a sheet only, for several hours in cold weather. Yet my dear father, who was more attentive than the rest, at last discovered that I was still living. At three years old, bandages were recommended to cure an infirmity with which I was

afflicted in consequence of bad nursing; these reduced my lower limbs to the bone and distorted my entire figure. My father's guardian eye again discovered the means of escape for his almost crippled child. He threw away the bandages with indignation, and thanks to his care, I recovered.

Allan Cunningham, whose brief life of Flaxman is practically the only biography of him we possess (for Mr W. G. Constable's valuable book is obviously intended to be a history of his work rather than of his career) says that the sculptor when a young boy could not move without crutches. This, however, has been denied by Miss Maria Denman, Flaxman's sister-in-law, and a member of his household from her childhood until his death. "I believe", she said, "that the story of the crutches is an entire fabrication. He was always reckoned a delicate and weak child, but not *infirm*." This statement was made in a letter sent to Cunningham some time after the publication of his *Lives of the most Eminent British Sculptors*, with which Maria Denman found fault, so far as the sketch of Flaxman is concerned. She complained that Cunningham had used information he had promised not to use, after he had been allowed to see the diaries or books in which it was contained; and sent with her letter an interesting list of annotations which Cunningham's son, Peter, published many years afterwards in *The Builder*.

Cunningham tells the well-known story of how Flaxman showed a drawing to Mortimer, who laughed at it. Commenting on this Miss Denman says:

This story of Mortimer is wrongly told. Young Flaxman was receiving lessons in drawing at school. One evening, a friend coming in, the lad showed him a copy of an eye he had been making from a drawing by his master, when the friend asked him if it was a flat fish? This jest gave the youth so mean an opinion of his master's abilities that he could not be prevailed upon to take any more lessons. Nor do I think Mortimer was the friend.

The suggestions of the biographer that Flaxman's knowledge of the classics was imperfect and that when illustrating Homer and others he was helped out by the ordinary translations, are contemptuously dismissed. "Mr Flaxman", says his sister-in-law, "was a good Greek, as well as Latin and Italian scholar,

and was not a bad French scholar, though he did not speak it well... He did not select from Pope or any other translator, but composed and designed his Shield of Achilles *entirely from the original Greek text*. It is a very great error to say that he was not a good Greek scholar." The statements concerning the date of the Collins monument at Chichester, and the sculptor's love for his group of Venus and Cupid, are both contradicted. The Collins monument, so far from being one of his earlier productions, was not executed until 1795, after his return from Rome; and the group of Venus and Cupid was not his favourite work. Those he liked best were the Collins monument and the one in memory of Miss Cromwell. Miss Denman contradicts also the statement that Flaxman desired to be engaged on some national work, and says that he infinitely preferred to be in the employ of private individuals. She also comments unfavourably upon some of Cunningham's remarks on Flaxman's larger monuments and his domestic life.

Of the latter, Cunningham says, in connection with Flaxman's marriage, that courtship and matrimony interrupted his work, and that Mrs Flaxman, addressing her husband as "John", cheered and encouraged him in his moments of despondency. "There was nothing like despondency in his disposition," corrects Miss Denman; "it was quite the reverse; and courtship and matrimony rather doubled his diligence than retarded it. Mrs Flaxman never called her husband John in his life, it was 'Flaxman', nor did he ever call her Ann (this mode of speaking of them totally changes their character) it was always either 'my love' or 'my dear Nancy'."

Nor does Miss Denman accept J. T. Smith's story (quoted by Cunningham from *Nollekens and his Times*) of Flaxman going round with an ink-bottle in his button-hole collecting the watch-rate for his parish. "You must be careful", she says, "how you quote Smith. He had too coarse a mind to understand Mr Flaxman's ways and knew very little of his affairs. Mr Flaxman never was a collector of watch-rates—at least I never heard of it—but I do know that he scrupulously avoided parish business

all his life. The ink-bottle story, as well as many more that Smith and others have related, must belong to someone else." The remark about the "coarse mind" of J. T. Smith recalls the opinion of him expressed by William Bewick, who knew him when he was Keeper of the Print Room at the British Museum. "He was", says Bewick, "a great retailer of anecdote and scandal, dealt largely in innuendo, and had a keen relish for any story of doubtful propriety."

Perhaps the most curious of all Miss Denman's annotations is one that refers to Cunningham's mention of Flaxman's closest friends. He says of two of them, "He also respected Howard the painter, and Stothard was a man much after his own heart". Of this Miss Denman says: "Mr Flaxman had the highest regard for Howard, both as an artist and as a man, but *his old friend Stothard* he could only admire as an artist". It is impossible to guess the meaning of this reservation about Stothard, who was a man of the highest character, universally liked and esteemed, and most intimate with Flaxman. He was the "dear old friend" of Constable and his frequent companion in country walks to Richmond and Combe Wood. Even Haydon, that enemy to Academicians at large, thought that he possessed "an angelic mind". And Leslie says, of his connection with Flaxman, that the sculptor "every year, on his wife's birthday, presented her with a small picture by Stothard".

Mrs Flaxman pre-deceased her husband by six years, and for that period, and longer, Flaxman's household had been managed by his sister-in-law. She was careful to make this plain to Cunningham in one of her annotations in which she describes Flaxman's death.

Mr Flaxman had taken a most violent cold at a friend's house. He had medical assistance, and was the most dreadful sufferer for the last three days, which he endured with a saint-like fortitude to the last moment of his earthly existence, which was terminated in my arms. Nor did he ever wish, or ever have other attendance than what he received from her whom he and his wife had adopted as their daughter in her early life. His sister, Miss Flaxman, had lived comparatively but a short time with them, and that till latterly only as a visitor.

On his wife's *sister* devolved all the duties and cares of his family, not only after but long before, the loss of his most inestimable wife, and between Miss Flaxman and myself subsisted the strongest and warmest friendship.

Although Miss Denman must have been well acquainted with William Blake she does not mention him in her annotations, except to say that Flaxman assisted him alone, and not with the help of the Rev. Henry Mathew as Cunningham states. According to J. T. Smith, Mr Mathew's acquaintance with Flaxman commenced when the sculptor was a little boy studying Latin in his father's shop in the Strand. Mr Mathew helped him with his Latin, and, says Smith, "as he grew up became his first and best friend".

Towards the end of the year the National Gallery received further additions in the shape of three pictures presented by the Directors of the British Institution, who had purchased them at different times with the profits from their exhibitions. These pictures were Parmigiano's *Vision of St Jerome*, West's *Christ Healing the Sick* and *The Consecration of St Nicholas*, by Paul Veronese. For West's picture, the largest of the three and measuring sixteen feet by twelve, the Directors paid the artist three thousand guineas. To accommodate the new arrivals considerable changes in the arrangement of the Gallery were necessary, and Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode* was removed from the west wall of the lower room to make room for West's *Christ Healing the Sick*. The Parmigiano was hung on the south wall of the large upper room, opposite the door, in the place of Vandyck's *Emperor Theodosius*; and the Veronese on the west wall, over the fireplace and opposite Sebastian del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus*.

The exhibition of the new pictures brought forth another letter in *The Times* from "Alfred", who reproached the Directors of the British Institution for paying an extravagant price for the Parmigiano, and abused William Segulier, the Keeper of the National Gallery, from every point of view. "Alfred" declared that the Parmigiano was at one time in the shop of a frame-maker in Conduit Street, who disposed of it for forty guineas. He contrasted this with the amount, £3202. 10s., known to have

been paid for the picture in 1823 at the Watson Taylor sale, and said:

Here is an increase without example! The reason shall appear as I proceed to the full development of the system, and total discomfiture of picture-jobbery. Mr Segquier who influences the whole picture-world to such a degree, and whose decree is so potent in it, fills so many situations that I know not which to begin with. However, he has the care of the King's pictures and purchases for him; Lord Grosvenor's, and purchases for him likewise. The pictures, old and modern, to be selected for the British Institution exhibitions, await his fiat for exclusion or reception, under the plausible pretext of coming from the Directors, who, even if it were so, derive their opinions from himself, which used to be retailed back again by him as those of Sir Charles Long, Sir George Beaumont, or any other Sir who happened to be in fashion at the time.

Mr Segquier cleans, buys and sells pictures. If a nobleman or collector dies, who values his pictures but Mr Segquier? When they are brought to the hammer, who names the price to be given for them but Mr Segquier? He formed Mr George Watson Taylor's collection, and it was to his interest that they should sell at high prices. Are we to be surprised then at their realizing a profit of £10,000? Will Mr Herries tell us again that this is the proper agent to employ for the National Gallery? He might as well attempt to unite the business of stockjobber with that of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The value of your space, Sir, forces me into brevity, but you will excuse my asking why was not the picture of Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse purchased for the Gallery, as reflecting two-fold on the nation, as an epic portrait of her greatest actress by the greatest painter she has yet produced? Why—but that an individual was not so easily led as a public body. For that picture Mr Segquier purchased for Lord Grosvenor.

The "Gallery" for which the writer thought the portrait of Mrs Siddons should have been acquired, was not the National Gallery but the British Gallery, as the British Institution was often called. The Watson Taylor collection, which contained both the Siddons portrait and the Parmigiano, was sold before the National Gallery was founded. Parmigiano's *Vision of St Jerome* was brought to England by Lord Abercorn, who bought it in Italy from Durno, the painter, and this seems to cast discredit on the story of the Conduit Street frame-maker. But it may have had vicissitudes of which we know nothing, after it passed out of Lord Abercorn's possession. When Tom Moore

went to the private view of the Watson Taylor pictures at Christie's in 1823, he met there the well-known collector, the Rev. W. Holwell Carr, who two or three days afterwards bought the Parmigiano for the British Institution. "Holwell Carr", says Moore, "traced the price of it to me from £120 to £7000." The long and outspoken letter in which "Alfred" criticized the purchase of the Parmigiano was ignored by Segulier and the National Gallery Committee, although it was displayed in *The Times* in large type at the head of a column.

At this time the influence of William Segulier in the world of art was extraordinary, and there were artists as well as collectors who believed in his judgment. Among the artists was Haydon, who also believed that the picture-dealer was a born diplomat and manager of men. Haydon mentions a conversation with him in this year, the day after Segulier had had an interview with the King about the Royal collection; and this conversation left no doubt in Haydon's mind as to who was the real ruler at the National Gallery. He says:

The King little thinks that under that impenetrable exterior; that mild, modest, humble, unaffected manner, lies the deepest insight; and that while the King is supposing he sifts Segulier, Segulier is sifting him with the power and scrutiny of the devil himself. This man turns the nobility round his finger, like a plaything, and they, good honest souls, fancy they are using him. Sir Charles Long, who introduced him, did so thinking he could supply his own place in business matters. Alas! Segulier will shortly supply his place in everything. Long is shrewd but Segulier is shrewder. He is in fact a match for all of them, and if he were a little more educated would be invaluable to any King.

The first Keeper of the National Gallery, who came of a family intimately connected with pictures and picture-dealing, was in some respects a remarkable man, but his reputation has faded and the name of Segulier is remembered only because it is mentioned by J. T. Smith, both in *Nollekens and his Times* and *A Book for a Rainy Day*, and also in a more recent publication, *The Farington Diary*. Smith was well acquainted with the Seguiers and his statements about them may be relied upon, but those contained in the footnotes to *The Farington Diary* should be

revised before the issue of another edition of that useful work. In Vol. III of the *Diary* it is said in the footnotes on p. 232:

David Segquier, a copyist and art-dealer, was descended from a French Huguenot family that came to London after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. A tradesman, he late in life took to art. Marrying a wealthy lady, Miss Anne Magdalene Clowden, he gave up painting and became a connoisseur and adviser to amateurs who were forming collections of pictures. He was for many years superintendent of the British Institution, first Keeper of the National Gallery, which was established in 1824, and conservator of the Royal Picture Galleries under William IV and Queen Victoria.

He was also a partner with his brother John in a picture restoring and valuing establishment in Russell Court, Cleveland Row. His own collection of pictures was sold at Christie's in 1844. Segquier's eldest son, William (1771-1843) studied under Morland, painted topographical scenes, and became a skilful imitator of the Old Masters.

These statements are inaccurate in several particulars. David Segquier, the picture-dealer, was the father-in-law of Miss Clowden, not her husband. He had nothing to do with the British Institution or the National Gallery, or with William IV and Queen Victoria; and the pictures sold at Christie's in 1844 were not his property. It was not David Segquier, but his elder son William, who married Miss Clowden and was manager both of the British Institution and the National Gallery, and conservator of the Royal pictures. It was William, too, who was in business in Russell Court with John Segquier, who was his brother, not his uncle. Of David Segquier, the father of William and John, little has been recorded, except that he was "merry and friendly" and that he assisted Richard Wilson in a time of need.

William Segquier was intended for a painter, and according to the *Dictionary of National Biography* was the pupil of George Morland. But a writer who, above the signature "Fidus Achates", championed Segquier in the correspondence that followed the attack of "Alfred" in *The Times*, said that Philip Tassaert was his master. Tassaert, who like many others of his time combined picture-dealing with painting, was a member of the Incorporated Society of Artists. He was one of the experts employed by the first Christie and compiled the catalogues of some of the finest

collections sold by the great auctioneer. George Darley, who knew and liked Seguier, says that he had some instruction from William Blake. This interesting statement is made in a note on Seguier in *The Life and Letters of George Darley*, edited by Mr C. C. Abbott, in which the Keeper of the National Gallery is described as possessed of "extreme urbanity, good humour, kindliness, and communicativeness upon the subject of art", and with the instincts of a gentleman, although ill-educated.

According to "Fidus Achates", Seguier abandoned painting when he was young in order to enter his father's business, and it is curious that Haydon, who despised lay opinion on art, admits that he was sometimes guided by Seguier. When painting his *Macbeth*, he notes in his *Dairy*: "Seguier called, on whose judgment Wilkie and I so much rely. If Seguier coincides with us we are satisfied, and often we are convinced we are wrong if Seguier disagrees". When Wilkie was painting *The Cut Finger*, the future Keeper of the National Gallery called upon him and criticized the picture. Wilkie writes in his *Diary* in 1809, November 13th: "Seguier called. He liked *The Cut Finger*, as far as it goes, better than anything I have done. He advised me to lessen the boy's hand and alter the colour of his pinafore. November 14th. Altered the boy's pinafore as Seguier had suggested, from a strong to a pale yellow, which has certainly improved the look of the picture".

## CHAPTER VII

1827

THE exhibition at the British Institution of the pictures from Carlton House remained open until January, 1827. It had been more successful than any of its predecessors. The net profits were more than £3000, and as the popularity of the exhibition was by no means exhausted, the Directors applied for, and obtained, the King's permission to show his pictures again in the summer of this year. This was done, but not without many protests from the artists who were accustomed to contribute to the spring exhibitions at the British Institution. As the Royal pictures were to be seen again, they were not removed from the galleries in Pall Mall, but were stored until the summer in the South Room, one-third of which was boarded off for the purpose. This meant that a large part of the wall-space of the South Room was unavailable for the spring exhibition of modern work, and *The Times* in February expressed its sympathy with the artists for whose pictures there was no room.

Another cause of complaint was that artists were compelled to pay for admission to see the Royal pictures. Until these pictures were shown, all artists who had once exhibited at the British Institution were admitted to the galleries free of charge. The temporary withdrawal of this privilege caused more discussion, and led to enquiries as to what was to be done with the large profits made by showing the Carlton House pictures. Were the three thousand pounds to be spent on Old Masters for the National Gallery or were they to be expended on pictures by modern men, who needed the money? But the Directors of the British Institution, unpopular in some respects as they were, showed by their report for 1826 how much the artists had benefited by twenty-one years of spring exhibitions. Since the

opening of the first exhibition in 1806, seventy-five thousand pounds worth of their pictures had been sold, and premiums had been awarded out of the profits to the amount of five thousand pounds.

Sir George Beaumont, who was one of the Institution's founders and most enthusiastic supporters, and whose generous gift to the National Gallery was recorded in the last chapter, died this year on February 7th, at Coleorton, his seat in Leicestershire. He had only survived by a few months the separation from his cherished pictures. Sir George's death was generally regretted, and by no one more than Sir Walter Scott, who thought him to be entirely void of affectation and the most sensible and pleasing man he ever knew,—“kind, too, in his nature, and generous; gentle in society and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general London tone of persiflage and personal satire”.

But, gentle and sympathetic as he was, Sir George had a strong sense of humour and in his youth enjoyed practical jokes. It was he—not Sir George Baker, as Sir Edmund Gosse suggested—to whom Northcote refers as Sir George B—in a story told to Hazlitt to illustrate the credulity of mankind. According to Northcote:

When a young man, he put an advertisement in the papers to say that a certain Mynheer — just come from Germany, had found out a method of taking a likeness much superior to any other by the person's looking into a mirror and having the glass heated so as to bake the impression. He stated that this wonderful artist lived at a perfumer's shop in Bond Street, opposite to an hotel where he lodged, and he amused himself the next day to see the numbers of people who flocked to have their likenesses taken in this surprising manner. At last he went over himself to ask for Monsieur — and was driven out of the shop by the perfumer in a rage, who said there was no Monsieur —, nor Monsieur *Devil* lived there.

An amateur painter from his boyhood, Sir George was at one period almost equally interested in the theatre, and a dramatic critic spoke of him in 1787 as “the best gentleman actor of the stage”. Actors were numbered among his personal friends, and included in particular John Bannister, who shared his sympathies

in other ways. For Bannister, who was also the intimate friend of Constable, commenced life as an artist, and had been a student at the Royal Academy. Sir George's sympathy with actors and the kindness of his nature are alike indicated in the following letter, written in November, 1820:

Coleorton Hall

Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Dear Bannister

A few days ago I sent you a little game, which I hope you received. I should also have sent some to our worthy friend Mr Wroughton, but although I recollect he lives in Howland Street I cannot remember the number. Pray inform me and say something also of the state of his health, for I regard and respect him exceedingly. He is one of the few left of the genuine old school and we shall not see its like again. You were, I am sure, sorry to hear of Mr Dance's illness—"Some ills we wish for when we wish to live", and this loss of friends is among the most pungent evils of old age. With best compliments to Mrs Bannister, I remain, with sincere regards,

Ever yours,

G. H. Beaumont.

Perhaps you can favour me with some theatrical news—"I hate all politics but theatrical politics"—especially at the present time.

Richard Wroughton, the actor, who was on the most intimate terms with Bannister, died two years after the date of the above letter, but George Dance, R.A., recovered from his illness and lived until 1824.

Political life had no attraction for Sir George, as he hints in this letter, and although he was a member of the House of Commons during one Parliament he did not seek re-election. "Painting", says Haydon, "was his delight. He talked of nothing else and would willingly have done nothing else." And Haydon recalled a happy fortnight spent by him and Wilkie as guests at Coleorton, when: "Sir George painted and Lady Beaumont drew, and Wilkie and I made our respective studies for our own purposes... We dined with the Claude and Rembrandt before us, breakfasted with the Rubens landscape; and did nothing, morning, noon and night, but think of painting,

talk of painting, dream of painting, and wake to paint again". Of Sir George's performances with the brush, there is nothing in any public collection in London, except the *Landscape with Jacques and the wounded Stag*, in the National Gallery, to which it was presented by Lady Beaumont after her husband's death.

This picture, when it was exhibited at the British Institution in 1825, was the object of a spiteful attack by the writer in the *London Magazine* whose bitter pen on the same occasion libelled Constable, as I have related in Chapter v. To find fault with the work of Sir George Beaumont was easy enough, for his achievements as a painter and the value of his opinion had always been overrated. But the attack in the *London Magazine* was unworthy, made as it was upon an old man who had never claimed to be more than an amateur, and who deserved courteous treatment if only for his consistent support of the arts in England. The following is the criticism of his *Jacques and the wounded Stag*:

Sir George Beaumont has been so long and so highly lauded that it seems more than bold to doubt; and yet we shall doubt his powers in landscape, and perhaps also his judgment respecting art in general. If he looks at nature, it is through Wilson; yet not through Wilson great and new, but blackened by varnish, yellow lake and smoke. Surely the colour of a landscape is an essential portion of it—we almost think it is the most essential. Docks and grass and the leaves of trees are not made of tar, nor water of milk and bitumen, nor skies of lampblack and indigo, for such is the Jacques before us. This might have been a picture painted two centuries ago, but it would not be the less bad now. And what will it be in two centuries hence? We only hope Sir George does not judge landscape as he paints it.

On February 12th, Turner was to have lectured on perspective at the Royal Academy Schools. But the lecture, the last but one of the series for the season of 1827, was countermanded by advertisements in the *Morning Post* and *Morning Chronicle*, to the effect that Mr Turner would be unable to continue his addresses owing to "a domestic affliction". Neither journal comments on this announcement but there is a reference to it in a paragraph in *The Times*, which contains, I believe, the only note on Turner's

lectures ever published in that journal. This paragraph appeared on February 13th, and ran as follows:

Mr Turner, the Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy, has this season omitted the conclusion of his annual course of lectures on that science, in consequence of the death of a near relation. His fifth lecture was to have been delivered at the Royal Academy last night. In the preceding lectures, Mr Turner illustrated his discourse with some admirable perspective drawings, well calculated to afford clearness to the definition of a science so abstruse as perspective, and which would otherwise be unintelligible in an oral essay. We make particular mention of these illustrative drawings, not merely on account of the high beauty which it may be supposed they possess, emanating from the hand of so celebrated an artist; but though to find fault is always a disagreeable task, we cannot help observing that Mr Turner's delivery is by no means clear, and we apprehend that without the aid of the graphic auxiliaries, his auditory would derive very little benefit from his lectures. We regret, however, that a domestic calamity should deprive the students of any advantages his lectures do afford.

Turner's delivery was notoriously bad and many of those who attended his lectures went to Somerset House only for the sake of seeing the beautiful drawings mentioned by *The Times*. The domestic affliction in the shape of the death of a near relation is mysterious and it is unlikely that its particulars will ever be made clear. Turner had no known relations in whom he was interested except his father who lived until 1830, and his mother who is believed to have died in a private asylum many years before. The "near relation" may have been someone—perhaps a child—intimately concerned with that secret life of the great painter of which so little has been revealed.

At a General Assembly of the Royal Academicians, held on April 5th, Sir Walter Scott was elected Antiquary to the Institution in the place of Sir Henry Englefield. Sir Walter, proposed by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and seconded by Thomson, the Keeper, was elected unanimously and with acclamation. He was not able, unfortunately, to be present at the annual dinner before the opening of the exhibition. Humboldt, who was then in England, was also invited to the Academy dinner, and Lawrence soon afterwards painted his portrait, of which Waagen

tells a curious story. He says that George IV induced Humboldt to sit to Lawrence before he left the country, and that the artist being pressed for time, took a canvas on which he had begun a portrait of Lord Liverpool, wearing a purple velvet coat. On this he painted Humboldt's head, intending to alter the drapery afterwards. This, says Waagen, was never done, and therefore the head in the portrait does not fit the body.

The Hanging Committee for the Royal Academy exhibition was composed of Leslie, Pickersgill and Wilkins, all newly-elected members and without experience in this responsible duty. They appear, nevertheless, to have given satisfaction, except in the placing of Edwin Landseer's picture, *The Monkey who had seen the World*. Landseer was an Associate, but members of that rank in the Academy were not treated as respectfully as they are now and the picture in question was placed almost on the floor. For relegating the picture to this position, the hangers were reprimanded by the *Literary Gazette*, the *Examiner* and other journals.

Lawrence sent eight works to the exhibition, among them a half-length of Mrs Peel, which, according to current gossip, was painted to hang in her husband's gallery as a pendant to the *Chapeau de Paille* of Rubens. It was much admired, but was outshone in popularity by Lawrence's portrait of Miss Croker, a famous beauty of the day, and the adopted daughter of John Wilson Croker, the Secretary to the Admiralty and an authority on Dr Johnson. "Men stand before it in a half-circle, admiring its loveliness", says one critic, writing of this portrait; and *The Times* declared that no one but Lawrence should attempt to paint a female head, as he alone seemed to be capable of transferring to canvas all the loveliness and grace of woman's form. Lawrence, who was very intimate with Croker, painted the portrait for him as a gift, "in just return for important kindness". But Lawrence, always mysteriously impecunious, wrote to Croker in the December after the exhibition of the portrait, to ask for the hundred and fifty guineas he would have received for it, in the ordinary course of things. "I would not", he said,

“and will not receive payment for the portrait, which was voluntarily offered by me, but I am unexpectedly in want of that exact sum to enable me to keep my word with a coarse man whom I have appointed tomorrow at three o’clock to receive it.” Croker, who was very proud of the portrait, asserted that no work of the same size and class had ever made so great an impression at the Academy.

Another portrait by Lawrence which attracted attention was that of Sir Walter Scott. The notes upon it as a likeness, made by the critic of the *Morning Post*, are worth quoting, as the writer appears to have been familiar with the appearance of the poet and novelist. He regards the portrait, though unromantic, as excellent in resemblance, and applauds

. . . the truth to nature, that contempt of fictitious details and of false interest, which would have metamorphosed the real Sir Walter Scott into a bard or troubadour. This is “the man as he is”. This, we scruple not to say, is not only the best portrait of Sir Walter Scott, but in truth the only one we have ever seen that appeared in everything like a representation of this extraordinary man, under whose *prima facie* plainness and simplicity even the most cursory observer soon discovers indications of the greatness and variety of his intellectual powers.

The *Morning Post* thought that after those by Lawrence, the portrait of Flaxman by Jackson was the best in the exhibition. This portrait, painted for Lord Dover, was generally admired, and that of the Duke of Wellington by the same artist as generally condemned, both for want of resemblance and for its muddy flesh tints. “We must suppose”, said the *Sun*, “that in the hurry of business the Duke forgot to wash his face, and if so, the artist’s rigid fidelity is alone to be blamed.”

Among the historical painters Etty was the most successful with his *Judith and Holofernes*, “a magnificent work” in the opinion of the *Literary Gazette*. Hilton’s immense *Crucifixion*, in three compartments which filled almost completely the end wall of one of the rooms, was also liked. But one of the most popular works at the Royal Academy was comparatively small—Mulready’s *A Boy Firing a Cannon* (124), which always had a crowd

round it. The *Courier* regarded it as perhaps upon the whole the most attractive picture in the Academy. It was bought by Mr Peel, who, it was said, gave Mulready five hundred pounds for it.

Turner showed five pictures this year, *Now for the Painter—Passengers going on board, Port Ruysdael, Rembrandt's Daughter, Mortlake Terrace—Summer's Evening, and Scene in Derbyshire*. The critical opinions on his work were diverse, but in the main uncomplimentary. *The Times* said of him:

Mr Turner has retrieved his character by his efforts on the present occasion. His largest picture, a water-piece (*Now for the Painter*) would do honour to any school. For correct imitation of the element it represents, it has perhaps never been surpassed. The waves absolutely appear as if rolling out of the frame. The sky is composed in a bold, original, and even poetic manner.

*Rembrandt's Daughter*, by the same artist, is a curious and beautiful example of the effect of light and colour. It is evidently a rough sketch and therefore we have no right to complain of the want of finishing, which must be startling to the general eye. We were so sorry to see among so many proofs of genius that Mr Turner has not yet got rid of his ambition to paint the sun. There is an attempt of this kind in the exhibition which is, as usual, ludicrously unsuccessful.

*The Times* was almost the only journal that said a good word for *Rembrandt's Daughter*. The *New Monthly Magazine* suggested that Turner intended the picture for a joke, and said that in any case it was a striking instance of time and talents utterly cast away. The *Morning Post* critic ridiculed *Rembrandt's Daughter*. "She is", he says, "seated near a bed, upon which, as well as over her own draperies, is spread a confusion of colour, like nothing we can imagine in nature, unless one could imagine a great dish of gooseberries and cream spilled over the quilt and the petticoat." Turning to another picture the same critic remarks that Turner gets worse and worse of yellow fever in each successive year and that his *Mortlake Terrace* is desperately afflicted with it. He regrets to see this in the work of a man of such genius. Similar regrets are expressed by the writer of a violent attack on the same picture in *John Bull*. After describing

the Academy exhibition as the worst he had ever seen, he says of the *Mortlake Terrace*:

Will anybody venture to say that nature, however bilious, ever looked as this picture represented her? That the Lord Mayor's barge, which was introduced only for the sake of the colour, should look yellow in its gingerbread decorations, is natural; and that the Aldermen's wives should look yellow from sea-sickness is also natural. But that the trees should look yellow, that the Moffatt family themselves and all their friends and connections; dogs, grass plots and white stone copings of red brick walls should all be afflicted with the jaundice, is too much to be endured. When we look back at the works of Turner of some twenty or twenty-five years standing and see nature in all her truthfulness glowing under his powerful hand, it makes us as sick as she looks in his pictures now, to see so sad, so needless a falling off.

*The Times*, which praised Turner's *Rembrandt's Daughter*, also championed Constable's *Chain Pier, Brighton* (186), and the comments of its critic on the picture suggest that he was acquainted with the artist. "Mr Constable's *Chain Pier, Brighton*," he says, "is one of his best works. He is unquestionably the first landscape painter of the day and yet we are told his pictures do not sell. He accounts for this by stating that he prefers studying nature as she presents herself to his eyes, rather than as she is represented in old pictures, which is, as it seems the 'fashionable' taste. That such a word should be heard of in matters of art!"

Constable's pictures rarely found purchasers, but in this year he appears to have disposed of one, the sale of which is not mentioned in Leslie's biography. The *Courier*, when recording in February the sales of pictures at the British Institution, said that one of the three shown by Constable had been bought by Mr Morant, a well-known collector of the time. One of Constable's pictures at the British Institution was the famous *Cornfield*, which never went out of the possession of the artist's family until it was acquired for the National Gallery. The second was *The Glebe Farm*, No. 1274 in the catalogue of the National Gallery, to which it was bequeathed by Miss Isabel Constable. *A Mill at Gillingham* (321) was the picture bought by Morant.

The *Morning Post* did not like either of Constable's pictures at the Academy and said of *Chain Pier, Brighton*, that it looked as if

streaks of ink had been dashed across it; and the critic of the *New Monthly Magazine* questioned the painter's wisdom in attempting to work in an unaccustomed field. He said of the sea-piece:

This is an attempt of Mr Constable in a new style, and we cannot congratulate him on the change. The present picture exhibits the artist's usual freshness of colouring and crispness and spirit of touch, but it does not exhibit them in connection with the objects to which they are so appropriate as they are to green trees, glittering rivulets and all the sparkling detail of morning scenes in the country. Mr Constable's style is rural and adapted to rural subjects almost exclusively. We do not mean that he cannot change it, but change he must, if he would meet with success in general subjects.

Just before the close of the exhibition at the Academy, English painters of subject pictures and landscapes lost one of their best friends and supporters by the death of Lord de Tabley, whose collection of modern work was perhaps the finest in England. Lord de Tabley, who died in his sixty-fifth year, was the son of a Cheshire baronet, Sir Peter Leicester, and it was as Sir John Leicester that he formed his famous collection. He was created Lord de Tabley shortly before his death by George IV, with whom he had long been upon terms of intimate friendship, "wholly from the impulse of the goodwill of his Sovereign". Like Sir George Beaumont, he was an amateur artist and had practised drawing and painting landscape under Marris, Francis Vivares, and Paul Sandby. His father, Sir Peter Leicester, was also in his day a patron of the arts, and Richard Wilson was his guest in Cheshire when he painted the view of Tabley House and Park that was in Lord de Tabley's possession when he died.

No man was more respected and liked by artists than Lord de Tabley, and one of his most ardent admirers was Raeburn, whose praise is the more valuable because he had not benefited by the collector's patronage. When acknowledging an engraving of a portrait of Lord de Tabley sent to him from London by a friend, Raeburn says:

I value the print because it is the likeness of a man I venerate, who, rising superior to common prejudices, has shown himself the munificent patron and

encourager of native genius, and who has so nobly and so much to his own honour, set an example to other men of fortune which I hope will soon be followed by many. The more I think of what this gentleman has done, the more I am convinced in my own mind that the good consequences of his exertions will be felt in this country for generations to come. I only speak the common sentiments of all my brother-artists, who never mention his name but with feelings of respect and esteem.

Lord de Tabley's death was not unexpected, as it was preceded by a long illness. Nevertheless it was alarming to artists because so many of the pictures in his collection were the work of men still practising their profession. Artists always dread the appearance of their work in the auction room, and a sale of this kind meant throwing a large number of modern pictures upon the market at one time. No one, however, anticipated the suddenness of their dispersal. Lord de Tabley died in Cheshire on June 18th, and on the 27th of the same month Christie was advertising the sale of his pictures in the London newspapers.

William Collins, two of whose works were in the collection, comments on the hasty sale in a letter to Wilkie, who was still abroad, travelling in search of health. He says, writing on July 9th, that Wilkie will be surprised to hear that notwithstanding the lateness of the season and the fact that Parliament was prorogued, Lord de Tabley's executors had sold by auction the whole of the collection at his house in Hill Street. "The artists in general," says Collins, "and particularly those who had pictures in the sale, were more than bilious. Turner and Sir Thomas Lawrence did everything in their power to induce the executors to put it off; but they were bent upon turning the pictures into money immediately."

The sale took place on July 7th, at Hill Street, in the picture gallery with the circular lantern-skylight, where the best of the works offered had been hanging for years. The gallery was crowded and the competition keen. On the whole, the prices realized were regarded as highly satisfactory. The picture for which the largest sum was paid was *The Cottage Door* by Gainsborough, now in America, in the Huntington collection. It was

put up at two hundred guineas and knocked down to Lord Grosvenor for five hundred, after some spirited bidding. The price of *The Cottage Door* was almost equalled by that of Turner's large landscape, *The Sun rising through Vapour*, which hangs to-day in the National Gallery. Turner was present at the sale to bid for his own pictures, and the disposal of this landscape was the most sensational incident of the day. One of the reporters of the sale thus describes it:

The landscape of Dutch fishing-boats with the sun rising through a morning vapour, by Mr J. M. W. Turner, was purchased by the artist himself for four hundred and ninety guineas. This picture excited the admiration of the whole company, which was manifested by loud clappings of hands on its being brought forward. The biddings for it, which were most exciting, also produced great applause, and Mr Turner, on becoming the purchaser, received the congratulations of his friends. Several other pictures by this distinguished artist produced high prices.

Turner's purchases of his own pictures included *The Blacksmith's Shop* and the *View of Kilgarran Castle*. His *View in Tabley Park*, painted for Lord de Tabley in 1808, was secured by Lord Egremont for £173. 5s. This was less than the sum realized for the *View of Tabley Hall and Park*, painted by Wilson for Lord de Tabley's father, which was knocked down at £204. 15s. Another, and finer, Wilson in the sale, *A View on the Arno*, was bought for £493. 10s. by Mr Watts Russell, who at this time owned Gainsborough's famous *Cornard Wood*, now in the National Gallery.

There were other Turners in the sale besides those I have mentioned, for Lord de Tabley had always appreciated the work of the landscape painter, who had visited him at Tabley on several occasions. On one of these he met Jerdan, who tells this curious story of Turner's behaviour towards his host:

Turner, our prince of landscape-painters, of whom Lord de Tabley had been a most liberal patron, spent a day or two at Tabley when I was there. In the drawing-room stood a landscape on an easel on which his Lordship was at work as the fancy mood struck him. Of course, when assembled for the tedious half hour before dinner, we all gave our opinions on its progress, its beauties and its defects. I stuck a blue wafer on to show where I thought a bit of bright colour or a light would be advantageous; and Turner took the

brush and gave a touch, here and there, to mark some improvements. He returned to town, and—can it be credited!—the next morning at breakfast a letter from him was delivered to his Lordship containing a regular bill of charges for “Instruction in Painting”. His Lordship tossed it across the table indignantly to me and asked if I could have imagined such a thing; and as indignantly, and against my remonstrances, immediately sent a cheque for the sum demanded by “the drawing-master”.

The de Tabley sale, its surroundings and results, were much discussed at the time; and the subject was revived in 1831, owing to some unpleasant remarks made in a note on picture sales, by the art critic of the *Morning Chronicle* on June 17th. The note was answered immediately in the following letter by William Tijou, the picture-framer and restorer, by whom the sale of 1827 was arranged:

17 Greek Street, Soho,  
June 18, 1831.

To the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*

Sir,

In your paper of the 17th appeared an article on a sale of modern pictures, written, I must say, in a very unkind and detracting spirit towards the painters, in which occur the following observations:

“We may hear that at Lord de Tabley’s sale the modern pictures fetched high prices. They were knocked down at high prices we know, but whether they were sold or not, is another question. Mr Turner was there and kept up his credit by buying his own pictures, *coûte qui coûte*. We wish all artists had purses long enough to play the same game.”

The insinuation conveyed in the above-quoted sentences it is in my power unequivocally to contradict. I was, with my father, employed, as is well known, for years by the late Lord de Tabley in the arrangement, etc., of his gallery, and after his death by his executors, and I positively assert that not only was no picture bought in, but that no reserve price was placed on any one, and that no person whatever was present to enhance the prices or otherwise to interfere with their free disposal.

With the observations respecting Mr Turner I have less concern. I may, however, be allowed to remark that there were but six pictures by that gentleman in the London gallery, and these were so well known and of so high a class that his presence or absence could have had but little influence on their sale. For one of them, the celebrated Fish Market (*The Sun rising through Vapour*), I had myself a commission from a well-known collector to purchase it for him at a price not far short of that at which Mr Turner bought

it. One picture alone has, since the dispersion of the gallery, been sold again at a public auction, and it obtained within a small sum of the original price.

The pictures of the late Lord de Tabley were sold under most disagreeable circumstances. From his lamented illness the gallery had been closed for three years at least, and they were sold in the month of July, when the Session of Parliament had terminated and when many of the most eminent patrons and collectors had left town for the season.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant

Wm. Tijou.

Returning to 1827 it is interesting to note that Lord de Tabley's pictures were sold at almost exactly the same time that Lord Grosvenor's splendid gallery in Park Lane was completed, and thrown open to the public on certain days. Lord Grosvenor's gallery took the place that Lord de Tabley's had occupied until his health broke down. It also boasted the chief attraction of the de Tabley collection—Gainsborough's *Cottage Door*, which was hung in the newly-built gallery, two days after Lord Grosvenor bought it at Christie's. In an article on the Grosvenor House gallery published in the *Literary Gazette* of July 14th, mention is made first of many pictures by Old Masters; and then of "the work of our own countrymen, the *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* by Sir Joshua, and the *Cottage Door* by Gainsborough (bought at Lord de Tabley's sale on Saturday)". But there is no mention of the *Blue Boy*, although Gainsborough's painting had been for many years in Lord Grosvenor's possession. The writer in the *Literary Gazette* thus concludes his article:

Before we lay down our pen, we desire, without instituting any invidious comparisons, and simply as the offer of our own tribute of thanks to Lord Grosvenor, to notice the proper and liberal conduct which has forbidden in this instance the reception of any *douceur* from visitors to his servants. The laying of such a tax is always to be lamented as an error in our national manners, but it is difficult to break through long-prevailing customs.

As the late lamented Lord de Tabley did, so has Lord Grosvenor done. Hundreds are allowed to promenade his residence—they are attended by servants, helped to catalogues, and meet with every kind of attention—and, as it should be in a prince's, a nobleman's, or a gentleman's house, "no money is taken at the door".

The gallery built by Lord Grosvenor remained in existence almost a hundred years and gave pleasure to three generations of picture-lovers, who were permitted at certain times to view the treasures it contained. But the gallery and Grosvenor House itself were demolished in 1926 and their places occupied by blocks of flats. The principal English pictures in the collection, Sir Joshua's *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* and Gainsborough's *Blue Boy* and *The Cottage Door*, are now in America.

In July, Henry Thomson, R.A., who had succeeded Fuseli as Keeper of the Royal Academy, gave notice that he intended to resign his post at the end of the year. Thomson, who made no mark as Keeper, was in such poor health that he retired to his native Portsea, where he lived until his death in 1843. He is said to have been proud, and Lawrence appears to have had a bad opinion of him. When writing about the affairs of the Royal Academy in 1810 Lawrence said: "With respect to Thomson and what Dance says of him, I have—have *had*—but one opinion. Hoppner might be violent; Opie, brutal; Soane, venomous; but for *envious Hatred*, and low, busy, toiling, *crafty* mischief, there has existed in the Academy no Iago like that man".

Yet Thomson's farewell to the Academy shows him in a pleasant enough light. He made a number of gifts to the body of which he had been a member for more than twenty years, and accompanied them with a long and sympathetic letter, a copy of which is preserved in the Minutes of 1827. "To the Royal Academy", he said, "I am indebted for my early professional education, and to obtain its honours was one of the dearest objects of my ambition. To sustain those honours with the credit which becomes an artist and the respectability which belongs to the character of a gentleman, has been my undeviating desire, and I trust I shall not be deemed presumptuous if I express a hope that they have not been tarnished in my hands." Thomson's gifts to the Royal Academy included *Temperance*, by Giorgione; *The Cottage Girl and Child*, by William Owen, R.A.; and a landscape by Mola, described by the donor as "re-touched", all of which are in the Diploma Gallery. The Academicians in return

presented their retiring Keeper with a gold snuff-box which cost fifty guineas. Thomson's work is rarely mentioned to-day, but his best-known picture, *Crossing the Brook*, realized two thousand nine hundred guineas when it was sold at Christie's in 1914.

The Royal Academy received another gift this year in addition to the pictures presented by Thomson. This was a cast from the Shield of Achilles, designed by Flaxman and presented by Messrs Rundell and Bridge, the leading silversmiths of the time, by whom Flaxman had been employed. The Council in return for this courtesy sent Messrs Rundell and Bridge four tickets for the Private View. A note in the Minutes of this year mentions that the Duke of Wellington usually expected two extra tickets for the Private View, which he regularly attended.

The applications to the Academy for relief this year included one from Samuel De Wilde, the once popular painter of theatrical portraits. De Wilde, who had exhibited at the Academy as far back as 1776, was now described as being "in a state of utter distress". Thirty pounds was given to him, and fifty pounds to Mrs Selina Innes, "in distressful condition". Robert Smirke had forwarded to the Council the appeal of this lady, who was the daughter of no less important a person than Sir William Chambers, the architect, the real founder of the Royal Academy and long its virtual ruler.

Two vacant Associateships were filled on November 5th. The first election resulted in the return of John James Chalon, the landscape painter. He was the elder brother of Alfred Edward Chalon, R.A., and a son of the teacher of French at Sandhurst. Chalon defeated Eastlake, a future P.R.A., by eleven votes to eight. In the second election Eastlake was successful. He received fifteen votes to four given to H. P. Bone, the son of Bone the Academician. Haydon, who had so far sacrificed his pride as to put his name on the list of candidates for Associateship, did not receive a single vote. This annoyed his supporters in the press, and the *Morning Chronicle*, in a leading article on the elections, protested in the following paragraph against their results:

How the Academy came to their judgment is a puzzle. We can imagine no possible line to exclude in the present state of the Arts, such an artist as Haydon. Is he unworthy of being an *Associate* among such Associates as figure in the roll of the Academy? Only, we should think, in one sense, that in which Coriolanus took his banishment—"You do not banish me—I banish you."

It is probable that Haydon himself had little hope of success, for no one had cared much for his *Alexander* when it was shown at the Academy; and the *Morning Post* had described it as "ill-grouped, ill-drawn, ill-coloured, and extremely vulgar". Another thing had militated against his election. In July, a public meeting had been held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, with a view to raising funds to relieve him from his debts. Haydon himself was not present at the meeting, at which it was disclosed that he was then in the King's Bench Prison.

The last event of the year at the Royal Academy was the appointment of a Keeper in the place of Thomson, whose term of office expired on December 10th. His successor, elected on the evening of that day, was William Hilton, on whom the choice of the Academicians fell, not unanimously as Sir Frederick Eaton states, but by a large majority of votes. There were two other candidates, Stothard and R. R. Reinagle, the first-named of whom received five votes and the second one. Seventeen voted for Hilton, who was in every way suitable for the post and was much liked and respected by the students. One of them was George Frederick Watts, who, although he disapproved of the methods of teaching at the Royal Academy Schools, admired its Keeper, whom he described as "an austere man of few words, one from whom praise was worth winning". Hilton, on his part, appears to have liked Watts and his work, for when the student failed to gain the medal for drawing from the life, he was consoled by the Keeper, who came to him across the room when the announcement was made, and whispered, "You ought to have had it".

Although successful in the sense of receiving the appreciation of his fellow-artists and the public, and in the disposal of two

or three pictures, for what were then regarded as high prices, Hilton was upon the whole unfortunate. It is said that he sold only about half a dozen works altogether. His large picture, *Edith and the Monks discovering the dead body of Harold* (measuring eleven feet by eight), and now at the National Gallery, was much admired at the Academy exhibition of 1834, but no one even asked the price of it and it came back unsold. When Robert Vernon, who afterwards bought the picture, saw it at the painter's house, it had been cut from the stretcher and rolled up. Hilton offered it to him for two hundred pounds—a small price for an important work—and for this, Vernon bought it. Solomon Hart says that when Hilton was Keeper he had little if any income beyond the small salary which was then attached to his office. A writer in the *Art Journal* in 1855 remarks when speaking of Hilton's disappointed life, that when engaged in his duties in the Royal Academy Schools, he might often be seen "pacing sadly and silently up and down the room as if occupied with thoughts too painful for utterance". This was after he had lost his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached. She was a sister of Peter De Wint.

## CHAPTER VIII

1828

Two pictures were sent to the British Institution this year by Bonington, both of Venetian subjects, *The Ducal Palace, Venice* (314), and *View of the Piazzetta, near the Square of St Mark* (198). *The Ducal Palace*, which was the larger, was spoken of by *The Times* as an imitation of Canaletto, but the *Morning Chronicle* described it as "a triumph of the English School"; and the *Literary Journal*, as a superb work which displayed a rapid and decided improvement on the part of the artist. The *View of the Piazzetta, near the Square of St Mark* was bought by Mr Robert Vernon, who was then forming the collection of pictures which he afterwards presented to the nation. According to M. Du-buisson it is identical with *The Column of St Mark, Venice* (374) now in the National Gallery. If this be so *The Column of St Mark, Venice* must have been cut down severely after its purchase by Vernon from the British Institution, for its present measurements are only  $17\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $14\frac{1}{2}$ , whereas those of the *View of the Piazzetta* are given as 25 inches by 22 in the catalogue of 1828.

Bonington's friend, Delacroix, was also represented at the British Institution. The French artist sent there his picture, *The Execution of the Doge Mariano Faliero*, which is now in the Wallace Gallery. It had been shown and admired in Paris, at the Salon of 1827, and gained further praise in London. "Our memory does not immediately furnish us with the name or former work of this artist," said the *Literary Gazette*, "but after seeing this admirable specimen of his talents we cannot easily forget him. It is in a noble and elevated style of art."

Constable was less fortunate at this exhibition than Bonington and Delacroix. His large painting of Brighton Chain Pier, which had been exhibited at the Academy in the previous year, was

prominently hung at the British Institution and was harshly criticized in the *London Magazine*, perhaps by the same writer who attacked him in that journal in 1826. "This", said the critic, "is one of those numberless productions by the same artist under which it might be written—*Nature done in white lead, opal, or Prussian blue*. The end is perfectly answered, why the means should be obtruded as an eyesore we do not understand. It is like keeping up the scaffolding after the house is built. It is evident that Mr Constable's landscapes are like nature; it is still more evident that they are like paint. There is no attempt made to conceal art."

This criticism appeared at a time when Constable was full of anxiety concerning the election of a Royal Academician, which was to take place on February 9th to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Flaxman. Constable had been an Associate for nine years, and in successive elections had seen inferior men promoted over his head. This was galling to his pride, and the following letter, written just before the election, seems to indicate that he was endeavouring to obtain promises of votes from some of the Academicians. The letter is addressed to Thomas Phillips, R.A., the portrait painter. Constable writes:

6 Well Walk

Hampstead, Feb. 2, 1828

My dear Sir

I cannot help writing to you to beg pardon in the first place for my (I fear) abrupt conversation with you yesterday, and to state other matters to you which relate to myself, and which I trust you will not take amiss.

It seemed to me that you had not formed wholly a right impression of myself. You thought I had been successful in public patronage, and besides, that I had not made those sacrifices to my art and to the Royal Academy that others of the Associates had done. May I be allowed under your candour to say a little about myself since I have been in the Academy? During that period I have painted about ten pictures (as considerable as my limited powers would go) all of which made their first appearance on its walls. One only of them (*The Lock*) found a purchaser among English collectors. It was sold to Mr Morrison by the disinterested friendship of Pickersgill. Two or three were bought by my friend Mr Archdeacon Fisher—from affection, being my schoolfellow—and two or three have found a home in France, bought of me

by a dealer at a hundred guineas each, one of which was sold in Paris for four hundred guineas. The others are still mine. I have never yet had the good fortune to see the face of an English patron of art.

Do not, my dear Phillips, believe for a moment that I speak thus in the spirit of complaint. My ambition has been to form, if possible, an original feature of English landscape, and to do any little good in my power to that institution which has so far honoured me, and for which I am grateful, and for my education.

To endeavour to do this, however, I have sacrificed the best part of my life and not a little of paternal property. I am now past the age of fifty, Mrs Constable has most delicate health, and has seven infant children who have to look to me only for everything in this world.

I don't feel uncomfortable while I am writing this sad letter to you, because I have long known you to be a man whose whole conduct is governed by the highest principles of probity and honour. And my object in writing to you at all is that I may be placed in your mind—fairly—in the list of my worthy brother candidates. I know I possess your esteem, of which I am proud, and am anxious at one time or other to receive your support, which I have never yet been fortunate enough to obtain.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yrs very sincerely,

John Constable.

Whether Phillips responded to this appeal is not known for the Royal Academy Minutes record only the bare results of the voting at elections. In any case Constable failed again. He was defeated by Etty, a much younger man and four years his junior as an Associate, and by the overwhelming majority of eighteen votes to five.

Etty, of course, was overjoyed, as he shows in a jocular letter written immediately after the election to his staunch supporter, his merchant-brother, Walter Etty, of Lombard Street. To him he says:

This is to inform you that your good ship the *William Etty* arrived safe and came to anchor in the bay tonight at half past ten; after beating about for so many years in the *Arte* (not Arctic) ocean. After being nearly wrecked on the coast of Italy we put into Venice and were there well caulked with Venice turpentine. After combating many hard gales from Cape Difficulty and being nearly upset on Rejection Rock, on nearing the land a *Constable* got on

board some of the Royal ships, and came out with five or six guns (swivels). But a broadside of eighteen long forties sent him to the bottom.

The pictures and sculpture shown this year at the exhibition of the Royal Academy were arranged by Turner, Hilton and Rossi, the sculptor. The exhibition appears to have been of average interest, but it made no appeal to John Wilson Croker, who was present at the dinner held before it was opened, and, as the following entry in his diary shows, was bored both by the speeches and the pictures. His neighbour at the dinner, whom he speaks of as Lord Farnborough, had hitherto been known as Sir Charles Long but had recently been raised to the peerage. Croker writes on May 3rd:

Dined with the Royal Academy. Sat between Mr Rogers and Sir Abraham Hume on one side and Lords Farnborough and Cawdor on the other. Opposite were Herries, Walter Scott, Davies Gilbert and the Speaker. Lawrence made a speech in praise of Turner and Danby. He and Scott made a neat speech on the toast of the latter's health. Prince Leopold spoke, or rather croaked, some broken English, the chief point of which was that in a hundred years, the English school of today would rival the Dutch school of two hundred years ago. Lord Aberdeen, honestly enough, mentioned nothing but Lawrence's works as worthy of notice. It is a very poor exhibition. After the dinner was on the table we waited a good half-hour for the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, who did not come and never intended to come.

The newly-elected Academician's work was prominent at the exhibition and was praised, and praised highly, but with reservations. It had been hinted earlier in the spring that Etty was verging on impropriety when he showed his *Venus now wakes and wakens love* at the British Institution. *The Times* then remarked of this picture that it was "entirely too luscious (we might with propriety use a harsher term) for the public eye", and stronger complaints were made of some of his work at the Academy. His principal picture there, one upon which he prided himself, was a composition based upon several passages from *Paradise Lost*, No. 193:

*A bevy of fair women richly gay  
In gems and wanton dress....*

It was claimed for Etty, in the *Sun*, that in this picture he had “discarded in some degree the defective colouring of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, and improved upon the drawing of Titian”, but the writer of the passage thought, nevertheless, that the artist had conceived his work in the very spirit of voluptuousness. The sedate *Gentleman's Magazine*, which took the same view, said, after remarking upon Etty's evident study of the great Italians: “With many of their beauties he has borrowed numerous defects, which are too striking not to be regretted. The actions, we might almost say paces, of some of his figures are outrageous, and the whole of them exhibit too much of that voluptuousness which his favourite Titian indulged in. This work has been purchased by the Marquis of Stafford for five hundred guineas”. The *Gentleman's Magazine* adds, sarcastically, “The picture will serve to accompany the *private* Titians of that nobleman”. It was probably the air of modernity about the figures in Etty's classical subjects that shocked his contemporaries. Even a writer in the *News*, who thought his Miltonic subject the finest thing in the exhibition, could not help remarking the oddness of the costume, such as it was. “One lady,” he says, “though she has walked out of doors quite naked, has taken care to have her hair curled by Truefitt, and wears a very handsome Turban from Madame Maredan's.” Madame Maredan, of Hanover Square, was a fashionable milliner of the time.

Turner sent four pictures to the Academy, all of which are now in the national collections. The critics gave them an exceptional amount of attention and the comments upon them ranged from extravagant praise to violent abuse. “Mr Turner”, said the *New Times*, “exhibits four magnificent works. He is indeed a master spirit, and under his hand art is made almost to surpass nature.” The *Atlas*, which went to the opposite extreme, thought that one of the “four magnificent works”, *Boccaccio relating the tale of the Birdcage* (262), “would excite pity if painted by a maniac”; and ridiculed the large *Dido directing the equipment of the Fleet* (70), which was described as a compound of ochre and brimstone. Except by the *New Times* the unfortunate *Boccaccio* was

generally abused. The slashing critic of the *News* characterized it as

... a daub of the most ridiculous kind by *the English Claude*—a very English Claude indeed! The figures are mere blotches, the drawing of the features would disgrace a dauber of Dutch dolls. The whole group seems more like Bedlam broke loose than a family of ladies and gentlemen. A smear of yellow and dirty green composes the landscape, while a polished silver tower stands behind against a patch of bright blue meant for a sky.

A half-length of the beautiful Lady Lyndhurst (77), the wife of the Lord Chancellor, was the most admired of the portraits shown by Lawrence, whose "elegant, affetuosa style", says Constable, was never happier than this year. Some of the critics ranked his portrait of Peel's little daughter (114) as equal in merit to the famous "Master Lambton" of 1825.

It was at this exhibition that Bonington, an artist of promise whose life was soon to be cut off, long before its prime, made his last appearance at Somerset House. He was represented by three pictures, *Henry III of France* (248); *Coast Scene* (330); and *The Grand Canal with the Church of La Virgine del Salute* (470). The *Coast Scene*, which, according to the *Observer*, was painted for Mr Griffiths, and *The Grand Canal*, were both admired; but Bonington's principal work was his historical picture, which represented Henry III receiving the Spanish envoys. *The Times* described it as "a bold, stately picture, very much unfinished, but displaying a power and breadth of style which can come from none but a master hand". *The Times*, however, says nothing of the position of Bonington's work upon the walls, against which the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Literary Gazette* protest, the last-named in the following indignant paragraph:

No. 245. *Henry the Third of France*. "Who put my man in the stocks?" said the angry Lear, after having found his faithful adherent in that unenviable position. With a similar feeling we may say, Who put this picture here? Why is the pain of stooping till one's back is nearly broken, to be inflicted as the price of the pleasure of looking at this able performance—a performance which would have done credit to the judgment of the Academy had they placed it in the best position the rooms afford. Besides possessing a harmony of colouring which would be honourable to any school of art, the subject is

treated in a most masterly manner. As a graphic illustration of the character and habits of the French monarch it may be ranked with some of the well-described scenes by Scott in *Quentin Durward*, or any other of his historical novels.

However, Bonington's *Henry III of France*, though admired by artists, made no great popular appeal. The picture at the Academy which more than any attracted the crowd was Danby's strange canvas, *An Attempt to illustrate the Sixth Seal* (340), in which the Irish painter rivalled John Martin's wildest flights of imagination. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, after mentioning a rumour that Beckford had purchased this "marvellous and astonishing work", says of it:

It is a most appalling picture, painted with the highest finish and worked up to the pinnacle of human horror and divine vengeance. To describe it would be impossible, unless we could catch the inspiration of the artist's mind:—rocks rent into immense masses by the vivid play of the lightning and shaken by the gaspings of the earthquake, appear tottering and precipitating themselves on a host of human wretches, who, agonizing with a sense of horror, are tearing their hair, prostrating themselves to the ground, rolling over each other, and tumbling off precipices into the earthquake's chasm. In the centre of the picture is a mighty Babylon shivering to its last stone.

The writer admits that Danby's picture has faults, but declines to enumerate them in view of its marvellous invention and prodigious effect. "There are critics", he says, "captious enough to do this for us, and who have done it, to their degradation and their shame."

Martin exhibited his *Fall of Nineveh* this year, but not at the Royal Academy. It was shown at a gallery in the Western Exchange, New Bond Street, and Haydon was present at the private view, where he met Sir Walter Scott, Mrs Siddons, and other interesting people. Haydon records in his *Diary* his poor opinion of the technical accomplishment both of Martin and the rival painter of *An Attempt to illustrate the Sixth Seal*. "Martin and Danby", he writes, "are men of extraordinary imaginations, but infants in painting. Their pictures always seem to artists as if a child of extraordinary fancy had taken up a brush to express its inventions. The public, who are no judges of the art, as an art,

over-praise their inventions, and the artists, who are always professional, see only the errors of the brush.”

In May, an action interesting to artists was brought by Thomas Clement Thompson against the proprietors of the weekly journal, *John Bull*. Thompson was the painter of that surprising work shown at the Academy of 1826, which, it will be remembered, Constable described as “a most atrocious portrait of the King, hideous to behold and of immense dimensions”. This portrait was severely handled by some of the critics, and a writer in *John Bull*, when commenting upon the close of the Academy, said that the exhibition had not been distinguished, “but was made remarkable by the individual impudence of a person named Thompson, who affixed to his name the letters R.H.A. and exhibited a portrait of the King (which is just fit for the sign of an inn) as if the King had sat to him for it. This bit of modest assurance must, for the sake of the art and the sake of the Monarch, be exposed”. The writer admitted that the King had allowed Thompson to make a sketch of his head, for a large picture proposed to be painted of the recent Royal visit to Ireland, but denied that his Majesty had sat for a portrait. Thompson, he said, had sewn his sketch into the middle of a large canvas, on which he added the figure and surroundings, and sent it to the Royal Academy as “A Portrait of his Majesty”, which the Committee thought had been painted by command or permission, and consequently admitted it.

On the ground of these statements, Thompson sued *John Bull* for libel, and when the action was tried before the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Sir Jeffry Wyattville, R.A., the King’s architect, were called as witnesses. Lawrence, who was accommodated with a seat on the Bench, did not give evidence, but Wyattville said that he remembered seeing the King sitting to Thompson; and an official from the Royal Wardrobe proved that a Field Marshal’s uniform and the blue cloak shown in the portrait were sent to Thompson’s house for his use. However, the jury, “without hesitation”, found for the defendants. Thompson, in a letter published in the *Morning Herald*,

professed himself astounded at the verdict, and declared that the portrait was a private one painted by the King's permission and that the King's clothes mentioned were lent to him for the purpose.

Bonington, who was painting in France while the critics were discussing his pictures at the Academy, had a sunstroke when working out of doors, and this, added to the effects of overwork on a constitution that was never strong, brought about a serious illness. He returned to England for the purpose of seeking medical advice in London, but sank rapidly on his arrival and died on September 23rd, in his twenty-seventh year. Bonington was a man of brilliant gifts who in his short life accomplished a remarkable amount of excellent work, but his career of ceaseless industry was almost uneventful. One interesting episode of his life in Paris has not been recorded by his biographers—his connection with Frederick Tayler, the artist, who was for many years President of the Society of Painters in Water Colours. Tayler, who was the same age as Bonington, describes their companionship in the following extract from a letter addressed to F. G. Stephens, the art critic:

It was at the hotel at Calais that I first met R. P. Bonington. He was with the French landscape-painter, Francia, and at the same hotel was S. W. Reynolds, the engraver, who reproduced many of Sir Joshua's works. Bonington had been making studies in the neighbourhood of Calais, and so, finding myself so warm an admirer of his talents, we struck up a friendship and agreed to take lodgings together in Paris. This we did, and studied together in the Louvre and at home, painting night and day.

After a time we took a house with a painting-room for horses, which had belonged to Horace Vernet. Here we had not been long before Bonington was seized with a longing to see Rome and make some studies in the Vatican, and I was left to take care of the house and his pictures, when an accident occurred which placed them in considerable danger. I was painting a portrait of a horse for Lord Henry Seymour, when suddenly the French cook entered the room bearing a set of *couverts* on his head. This so frightened the horse that he broke from the lad who held him and dashed at full speed round the room, kicking out in all directions, to the great danger of Bonington's pictures, which were placed on the ground. A favourite pointer dog of mine left the room, also at full speed, and I never could hear any tidings of it after-

wards. Some time after this Bonington returned from Rome bringing some fine studies made in the Vatican, etc., and I left Paris and went to Scotland. While there I heard to my great regret that Bonington had had a sunstroke while painting in a boat on the Seine, and from this, alas! he never recovered.

Louis Francia, whom Tayler describes as a French landscape painter, was English by adoption and training, just as Bonington was French. Bonington, born in England, was taking lessons from Francia; who, born in France, learned his art from an Englishman whom he venerated, John Charles Barrow. Francia, who lived in England a great many years, was for a time the Secretary of the Associated Artists in Water Colours, of which De Wint was a member. He was once a candidate for the Associateship of the Royal Academy, but received no votes, and in 1822, as I have mentioned on p. 34, endeavoured to induce the Academicians to purchase an altar-piece described as the work of Memling. Francia, when he was teaching Bonington, had some official connection with the country in which he had lived so long, for he described himself at that time as Secretary to the British Consul at Calais.

Some interesting notes on Bonington were contributed to *Notes and Queries* in June, 1871, above the signature "P. A. L." The writer does not appear to have known Bonington, but was well informed concerning his affairs, and had been acquainted with some of his intimate friends in France, including Baron Rivet, M. Montfort and M. A. Colin. He was particularly attracted by Bonington's work, and had seen the John Lewis Brown collection and the exhibition held in 1834 (not 1838) by the painter's father. "P. A. L." says:

I was intimate some forty years ago with a French gentleman a long time resident in London—Mr John Lewis Brown—who was then the fortunate possessor of as many as a hundred and sixty eight water-colours by that admirable and fertile hand. . . . It was, if I mistake not, in 1838 that I saw an exhibition in Regent Street wholly of Boningtons. I used to go there and study them for hours, so much so that Bonington's father, who at the entrance delivered the catalogue and received the shilling fee, at last refused to let me pay. He asked me to his lodgings where he could show me many unfinished

sketches by his dear, departed son. With them were some copies by the father—but how inferior!

Of Bonington's period of study in the school of Baron Gros and of his misunderstanding with his master, "P. A. L." tells the story as it was told to him by one of Bonington's fellow-pupils who was present at the subsequent reconciliation. After Bonington had worked for a short time in the school, the Baron, dissatisfied with the new student's independent way of treating art, looked at his drawing and said in his rough and ready way: "This is all nonsense. You are wasting your time and your parent's money. You had better turn your mind to something else". However, soon afterwards Gros happened to pass by the shop of a then well-known and handsome picture dealer, Madame Hulin, who, "P. A. L." says, "unfortunately for the lovers of art took too great a hold on dear Bonington's affections". The Baron saw in the shop window some views of Rouen, Caen and other towns, the boldness and truthfulness of which impressed him immensely, and was surprised to find that they were the work of Bonington.

The next day, when Gros was seated before Bonington's easel, correcting his work from the living model, he looked up benevolently at the student and said that he had seen the day before in the Rue de la Paix some fine drawings of towns in Normandy and understood that they were by him.

"Eh bien! mon garçon, c'est bien, mais très bien. Je vous en fait mon sincère compliment. Allon, allons, je vois que vous avez trouvé votre voie. Suivez-la!" Softening his voice and putting out his right hand, he said: "Dorénavant vous viendrez ici tant qu'il vous plaira, et je n'entends pas que cela vous coute rien".

On November 8th, at Gateshead, in his seventy-sixth year, died Thomas Bewick, another artist of great gifts, and, in his own line, a master. In a letter to John Chambers, in which he sketches the principal events of his life, Bewick says that he was born on August 10th, 1753, at Cherry-bourn House near the hamlet of Eltringham, which is on the south bank of the Tyne and a few miles from Newcastle. "My father, John Bewick," he writes,

“who farmed the collieries there, was of a lively and cheerful temper of mind, and was much noticed by the whole countryside for his witty sayings, his droll stories, and his facetious remarks. My mother, Jane Bewick, whose maiden name was Wilson, came from Ainstable in Cumberland. Her father was either the curate or the parish clerk of that place.” John Bewick’s son inherited his father’s happy temperament, according to William Gardiner, who made the engraver’s acquaintance when visiting the north of England in 1806. Gardiner says, in his *Music and Friends*:

At Newcastle I called upon that ingenious artist, Mr Bewick, the wood-cutter, whom I found at work at his bench with some dead wild fowl before him, which he was cutting upon a block. . . . He was remarkably droll and entertaining in his manner; indeed anyone that has seen his works must be impressed with that part of his character. All the while I was with him he continued his work, and I learned that he never made a drawing of the animal depicted, but cut them from nature, as he was then doing. His performances in this art have never yet been equalled, and his history of quadrupeds can only be procured at an extravagant price.

Gardiner’s statement that Bewick made a practice of engraving upon the block directly from nature without making a preliminary drawing is not, however, accepted by Mr David Croal Thomson, Bewick’s biographer, and an acknowledged authority on his productions. Mr Thomson, who deals with the artist’s methods in *The Life and Work of Thomas Bewick*, and in a recent book on Bewick’s water-colours, says that he always made a careful drawing on the block itself, before beginning to cut.

In the same year that Gardiner saw Bewick at work, Newcastle was visited by an artist in whom the wood-cutter was particularly interested. This was the engraver, Isaac Taylor, who had been the last secretary of the Incorporated Society of Artists—the Society whose seceding members formed the Royal Academy in 1768. He was the founder of a family of artists and literary men and women, and the grandfather of Jane and Ann Taylor the well-known writers for children. Taylor, who was now an old man, had in his prime been a good friend to Bewick when he was a youth studying in London.

Taylor wished him to remain there, and was angry when he refused to do so; and, says Bewick in his *Memoir*, "my kind friend left me in a pet and I never saw him more". He did not see him in Newcastle because the old engraver left the town without calling upon him. This hurt Bewick, who on his side appears for the first time to have realized that he had neglected a man who had served him well at a difficult period of his life. He therefore sent him a large paper copy of the *British Birds*, with this letter which is honourable alike to its writer and to the man to whom it is addressed:

Newcastle

18th April, 1806.

Dear Sir

After the slipping away of nearly twenty-nine years, in the whole time never having seen or heard of you, it may be supposed that I have forgotten you, and no doubt you have had but little occasion to remember me, except it be to think upon the great pains you took to serve me while I remained in London, and that I have never acknowledged the sense I entertain of the obligation—but long as is the period since I had my last interview with you, I have never in all that time thought about London without turning over your name in my mind and of coupling it with the plans you then laid for my advancement. But those plans were not to take place and those times have passed away.

I was then in the heyday of youth, completely like a wild colt, and from the temperate, or rather from the poor, manner in which I had too long habituated myself to live, I became too independent—regardless of money-making and fearless as to the future, and as I did not like London, viewing it perhaps too much on the gloomy side of the picture, no considerations of what it might have done for me could tempt me to remain in it.

I now, as a token of respect and gratitude, beg your acceptance of these two volumes of *British Birds*—these books may be of little value to you, but I know not what I can do more. If they can in any degree serve to put you in mind of your own great goodness of heart, that consideration will always be gratifying to me.

These publications were brought forth after many a long night's labour, for the greater part of the cuts was done by candlelight, when left in my workshop alone, and chiefly on account of my being uninterrupted at that time. I hope the reward of a small independence will at last come, and if it does it will come opportunely, for I have abused my sight so much that I cannot

now continue long at engraving. In other respects I am strong, hearty and well. I hope this will find you in health and spirits.

I am, my dear Sir, with the greatest respect, your grateful and obedient servant,

Thomas Bewick.

The closing paragraph of the letter indicates why Bewick did little work of importance after the publication of the second volume of the *British Birds* in 1804. There is no mention of his injured sight in the *Memoir* or in the long, unsigned obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January, 1829, which was written by his life-long friend William Bulmer, the well-known printer.

Glimpses of Bewick and of his surroundings at Newcastle were given by one who had known him in some notes published in the *Builder* in May, 1857. In these notes the writer describes Bewick's house by the churchyard of St Nicholas, and his workshop on its upper floor:

Here for several hours in the day the engraver might be found busily employed at his desk in a little sanctum. On one side was a small glazed door which afforded the master an oversight of and communication with his pupils, and through this opening, Clennell, William Harvey, Nesbit and others, have received many a useful lesson. On the walls of his study, or workshop, were cases of stuffed birds and fishes, and some choice old prints. The place was plain and homely, like its inmate, who was generally dressed in a suit of grey, of useful rather than ornamental cut.

Bewick was a tall, stoutly-formed man of pleasant yet plain manners, and was always ready to speak his mind, disliking much the flattery which was bestowed upon his work by those ignorant of his art. He was an excellent musician and played well on the Northumbrian bagpipes. On the news of the Peace of 1815 arriving at Newcastle, the church bells rang, the cannon on the old Castle roared, and Bewick buckled on his pipes and caused his son Robert to do likewise. Then, playing an appropriate tune they marched more than once in triumph round the churchyard.

William Bell Scott, who was appointed to the charge of the Newcastle School of Art in 1845, and heard the younger Bewick play on the Northumbrian pipes, was much impressed by his skill. He was, however, so shy, that in order to gain confidence he always commenced his performance on the landing, before entering the room in which he was to display his musical powers.

John Chambers, to whom Bewick gave particulars of his career, in the letter mentioned on p. 152, was the author of a work on artists that never saw the light, although announced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October, 1815, as nearly ready for publication. The first statement concerning it appeared in June, 1814, when it was said that Mr Chambers, of 43 London Street, Fitzroy Square, had for the last seven years been preparing "a Biographical Dictionary of Artists who have practised in England, including Painters, Engravers, Sculptors and Architects, compiled from documents original and collected, in his own possession or contributed by artists themselves or their relatives". He proposed to illustrate the book with portraits and had prepared drawings of two hundred which had never been engraved.

A little later Chambers published a list of the names of artists not noticed by Walpole, Granger, Noble, Dayes or Edwards, and asked that any information about them might be sent to his publisher, Mr Colburn; but the dictionary never made its appearance. Chambers may have collected a good deal of information, for letters sent to him by other artists have occasionally appeared in sales of autographs. But only one extract from his unpublished work has seen the light—a note on Nathaniel Dance, sent by him "from my MS collections", in reply to a question asked by a correspondent of the *Somerset House Gazette*. The result was unfortunate, for the note, in some respects inaccurate and in bad taste, was assailed in succeeding numbers of the magazine by two or three writers, one of whom described it as "the most contemptible, flimsy trash that ever disgraced any periodical paper".

Constable suffered an irreparable loss this year by the death of his wife, on November 23rd. She had been ailing since the spring, but had so far recovered by the end of August that her husband wrote hopefully about her health to his friend John Dunthorne, and seemed to look forward to its complete restoration. But he had no illusions on this point when Leslie called upon him at Hampstead a few days before the end and found Mrs Constable resting on a sofa in the parlour. In her presence Constable maintained his usual cheerfulness, but, after leaving

the room with Leslie, grasped and wrung his friend's hand and broke down altogether. On November 27th, in reply to a letter from Pickersgill the portrait painter, Constable wrote:

I feel quite unable, my dear Pickersgill, to thank you sufficiently for your letter; the time may come when I can avail myself of the solace your early, kind and manly sympathy offers—the society of your dear family, but my loss, though long looked for, now it has come, has overwhelmed me, a void is made in my heart that can never be filled again in this world. I seem now for the first time to know the value of the being I once possessed, and I know not where to look for consolation. I turn to my seven lovely infants, but children are a doubtful good, and that which the sight of them even now affords is of a mournful kind. My dear departed angel died in my arms on Sunday morning.

Fortunately Constable had not to depend for the support of his motherless children upon the uncertain reward of his exertions as a painter. Mrs Constable's father, who pre-deceased her by a few months, left his daughter about twenty thousand pounds.

An election took place at the Royal Academy in November to fill a vacancy in the list of Associates. Haydon put his name down again as a candidate, but had no better fortune than in 1827. He did not receive a single vote, and the Associateship fell to Gilbert Stuart Newton, who in the final ballot had seventeen supporters against seven for Witherington, the landscape painter. The election of Newton as an Associate was followed on the same evening by that of Charles Turner as an Associate-Engraver. Turner, who tied in the ballot with Samuel Cousins, was elected by the casting vote of the President.

## CHAPTER IX

1829

THE night of February 10th, 1829, witnessed the election of Constable as a Royal Academician after many failures. But his success came too late to give him the gratification of sharing with his wife the pleasure of its attainment, and therefore lost much of its charm. "It has been delayed", he said, "until I am solitary and cannot impart it." Nevertheless it must have been a great satisfaction for a man conscious of his own powers, as Constable was, to be removed at length from the lower rank of membership in which he had been allowed to linger for ten years while witnessing the promotion before him of such now-forgotten landscape painters as Daniell and Reinagle. The Academician to whose place Constable succeeded was William Redmore Bigg.

Constable's success was gained only by the narrowest margin, although in the preliminary voting he had a large majority and his success in the final ballot seemed certain. But the friends of Danby, his most dangerous opponent, rallied strongly, and in the end Constable was victorious only by a single vote—fourteen to thirteen. Late on the night of the election Turner called upon Constable to inform him of the result, and remained talking until one o'clock the next morning, when the two great landscape painters separated "mutually pleased with each other". Yet it is possible that Constable was not the man whom Turner wished to be successful. Eastlake, at this time in Rome, was among the candidates, and perhaps had been promised votes that were not given to him. Turner, in a letter written to Eastlake soon after the election, quotes and comments upon the figures of the preliminary voting: "First list: Constable 12, Danby 6, Clint 5, Briggs 2, Eastlake 2, Landseer 1. Draw your own conclusion from this petty treason".

Turner had spent part of the winter of 1828-9 in Rome with Eastlake and had returned to London only a few days before Constable's election. The pictures Turner painted in Rome had caused some sensation in the artistic circles of that city, as Eastlake states in a letter written in February to a friend at Liverpool:

You will have heard of Mr Turner's visit to Rome; he worked literally day and night here, began eight or ten pictures and finished and exhibited three, all in about two months or a little more. More than a thousand persons went to see his works when exhibited, so you may imagine how astonished, enraged or delighted the different schools of artists were, at seeing things with methods so new, so daring, and excellencies so unequivocal. The angry critics have, I believe, talked most, and it is possible you may hear of *general* severity of judgment, but many did justice, and many more were fain to admire what they confessed they dared not imitate. You will probably see in the Exhibition two of the pictures, *Regulus* (a sea-port) and a view of *Orvieto*. The third was called *The Vision of Medea*, the figures principal, very bold and poetical, and most agreeable in general colour.

Turner, however, sent none of these pictures to the Academy in 1829, but he exhibited the *Orvieto* in 1830 and the *Vision of Medea* in the following year.

This letter of Eastlake's also contains an interesting note on Joseph Severn, the friend of Keats, who had won the Royal Academy travelling studentship some years before and had since lived and painted in Italy:

You have doubtless heard of Severn's marriage before this; he has been very fortunate, if good fortune can ever attach to the word marriage. To some it is a contradiction—to me because I left it too long. But Severn was married without much consideration,—like all else that happens to him, and he is even happier than before. It was difficult for him to be *much* happier, but he has really reason to be so.

Elizabeth Montgomerie, who was married to Severn in Florence, in somewhat romantic circumstances, was the ward of the eccentric Lady Westmorland. Severn, who spent most of his life in Italy, was never elected to membership of the Royal Academy, although he gained the highest honours in its Schools and contributed more than fifty pictures to its exhibitions. He

was a candidate for the Associateship in 1840, but immediately before the election Turner challenged his name on the ground that he lived abroad, and it was struck off the list. In this it was thought that Severn was harshly treated, as six years earlier Gibson, the sculptor, who also lived in Italy, had been elected an Associate in spite of a protest on the ground of non-residence.

Sir William Beechey, now a very old man, showed at the spring exhibition of the British Institution a picture which was much admired, but was entirely different in style from his ordinary work. The picture, *Children going to Bed*, was particularly noticed by the critic of the *Atlas*, who saw in it the influence of Gainsborough, and, examining it closely, found that it was dated 1789. "It is to be regretted", he said, "that Sir William did not paint fifty pictures of the same class and of the same school of colouring; they would be worth all the acres of canvas he has covered with the portraits of ladies."

Constable sent to the British Institution two pictures, which according to one of the critics had been in his painting-room for a long time. But he had probably worked on them recently, for with the exhibition of these two landscapes began the systematic attacks upon him for bespattering the surface of his canvas with white paint—attacks which were to increase in violence during the succeeding two or three years. "Mr Constable", said the *London Magazine*, "has one or two spirited landscapes, such as would excite much admiration were it not for the mannered and spotty whiteness which disfigures them." The *Atlas* also complained that in the *Landscape and Lock* (38) the surfaces of all the objects were broken into minute lights, which made them most disagreeable to the eye. Constable at this time was endeavouring in all sincerity to obtain, by numerous touches of white, the effect of light on wet grass and foliage. Solomon Hart has described how he called upon him when an experiment in the new manner was in progress:

I found Constable with a palette-knife on which was some white mixed with a viscous vehicle, and with which he touched the surface of a beautiful picture he was painting. Upon expressing my surprise, he said, "Oh, my

dear Hart, I'm giving my picture the dewy freshness". He maintained that the process imparted the dewy freshness of nature, and contended that the apparent crudeness would readily subside, and that the chemical change which would ensue in a short time would assume the truthful aspect of nature. I cannot acquiesce in his views.

However, there were some who admired, in spite of its white spots, the *Landscape and Lock*, which was an effect of cloud and rain, and it was one of the pictures that found purchasers this year at the British Institution. Other works sold at the same exhibition included two by Thomas Webster, bought by the King. Webster, who was afterwards a Royal Academician, had been brought up at Windsor and was the son of a member of the household of George III. The last exhibited work by Bonington, sent to the exhibition by his father, was bought by Lawrence. "Sir Thomas Lawrence", said the *Athenaeum* in February, "lost no time in making the acquisition of a very clever production of the late Richard Parkes Bonington, No. 58 *A Turk*, a small picture treated with most artist-like effect and replete with feeling."

The sale of Constable's *Landscape and Lock* is not mentioned by Leslie, although he twice refers in earlier years to its purchaser, James Carpenter, as the buyer of other works by the artist. But he says nothing about this collector, nor do the biographers of Bonington, although that artist was intimately connected with Carpenter during his brief career in England, as his correspondence shows.

James Carpenter was a prosperous bookseller, and a publisher of books and engravings, who lived and carried on his business at No. 12 Old Bond Street. In a way he was also a dealer in pictures, and paid particular attention to the work of young men of promise, among whom at this time was Sidney Cooper, the animal painter. Cooper speaks in his autobiography of his dealings with Carpenter, whom he seems to have mistrusted. The bookseller bought two small pictures from Cooper and probably disposed of them satisfactorily, as he soon afterwards invited the artist and his wife to dine with him in Old Bond Street, to meet

J. D. Harding, the watercolour painter, the man whom Ruskin thought to be, after Turner, "the greatest master of foliage in Europe". The dinner was excellent, and when it was over Carpenter, who said he hoped to do a great deal of business with his guest, produced and read a document he had drawn up. It was a contract which he wished the artist to sign, agreeing to pay him thirty pounds each for three pictures, the first of which he was to commence immediately. Cooper said he should like to think about the proposal before agreeing to it, and was dissuaded secretly by Harding, who, as they passed into the drawing-room, whispered in his ear, "Don't you sign that paper". Carpenter renewed his offer later in the evening, but in vain, and Harding afterwards told Cooper that their host would have obtained a hundred pounds each for the pictures for which he offered to pay thirty. Carpenter had foreseen that the market value of Cooper's cattle-pieces would rise rapidly, as it did. The next picture he sold was to that well-known collector, Robert Vernon, who paid him a hundred pounds for it—more than Carpenter had offered him for three.

Leslie in his life of Constable also mentions a William Carpenter, but says nothing of his connection with James, of whom he was the son. It is in a letter to William Carpenter that Constable makes his often-quoted assertion that John Robert Cozens was "the greatest genius that ever touched landscape". William Carpenter, who was engaged in his father's business for many years, became, after his retirement, Keeper of the Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. He married Margaret Gillies, the sister-in-law of William Collins, R.A., who, as Mrs Carpenter, made a reputation as an artist and was regarded as the best woman portrait painter of her time. Through James Carpenter she became acquainted with Bonington, and painted the portrait of him which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery.

The Hanging Committee at the Royal Academy this year was composed of Robert Smirke, Abraham Cooper and William Collins. The Minutes contain no references to appeals from

members for days of grace before sending in their pictures, or complaints about the hanging of them, as there were sometimes in the earlier days of the Academy. But the complaints in the newspapers about the excessive privileges allowed to members in connection with retouching and varnishing their pictures, and the total neglect in this respect of artists outside the Academic pale, were renewed more strongly than before. It was stated, and with truth, that while five varnishing days were assigned to members, the outsider was not even allowed to dust his picture, and did not see it until he was admitted on the opening day with the general public. The *Morning Chronicle* abused the Hanging Committee particularly for the way in which cabinet pictures were treated by them. "At the British Institution or Suffolk Street", said the *Chronicle*, "they shine in their proper sphere, but here they are lost. The hangers never place pictures diminutive in size, however great their merit, level with the eye. They are either placed in the earth or stuck in the sky.... It happens, however, that two small pictures by Collins, No. 103 and No. 371, are placed even with the eye. But Mr Collins, it is true, was one of the hangers."

A notable feature of the exhibition was the reappearance of Wilkie, who had shown nothing at the Academy since 1825. Most of the intervening time had been spent by him in wandering in Italy and Spain in search of health, and in painting pictures and studies in both countries. He showed this year a portrait and seven Italian and Spanish subject pictures, of which *The Defence of Saragossa* (128) was the most popular, and at once recovered his former reputation, although his style had changed altogether. Four of his pictures were bought by the King, who gave him commissions for two others, both of which were to illustrate incidents of the French invasion of Spain. *The Times* devoted half of its first notice of the Academy to a flattering description of Wilkie's pictures. The *Gentleman's Magazine* said: "Wilkie, who has hitherto delighted us with homely scenes, has turned his splendid talents and active genius into a new walk; and has produced a series of pictures unrivalled by any artist.

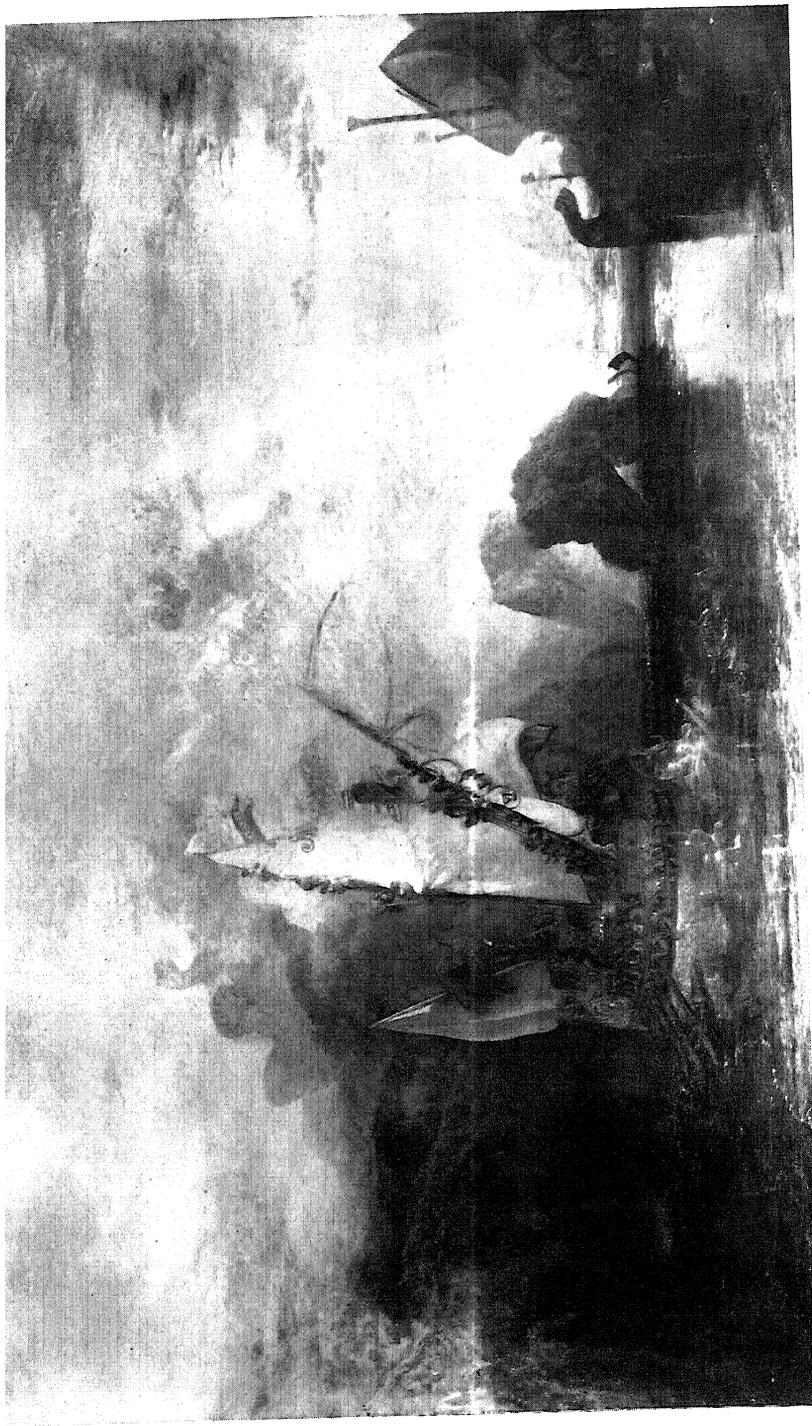
In his former style he obtained a popularity which none other could aspire to; in his new one, he will deserve and acquire still higher fame”.

However, Wilkie's change of style was regretted by many of his friends, and by none more than his old fellow-student Haydon, who had a long talk with him soon after his return, while looking over and discussing his Spanish pictures. Haydon says that he was all for Spanish and Italian art, and thought nothing of his beautiful early efforts—*The Rent Day*, *The Blind Fiddler*, and *The Village Politicians*. Wilkie thought they were not carried far enough. “As if”, says Haydon, “anything on earth in point of expression and story was ever carried farther!”

Turner was represented, among other works, by one of the finest of his imaginative pictures, the famous *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus* (42), which, however, was not to the taste of all the critics. Some of them ridiculed it, and the representative of the *Morning Herald*—a journal famous in earlier years for its vigorous and consistent championship of Gainsborough—thus expressed himself about Turner's principal work in the exhibition:

*Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*. This is a picture in which truth, nature and feeling are sacrificed to melodramatic effect. Had it been from an unknown person we should not have noticed it, but the name of Mr Turner might give authority to errors which would have the effect of misleading the young and the inexperienced. If the French fail in want of colour, this artist equally departs from nature in the opposite extreme. He has for some time been getting worse and worse and in this picture he has reached the perfection of unnatural tawdriness. In fact it may be taken as a specimen of colouring run mad—positive vermilion—positive indigo; and all the most glaring tints of green, yellow and purple contend for mastery on the canvas, with all the vehement contrasts of a kaleidoscope or a Persian carpet.

But Turner never lacked supporters, and although the *Morning Herald* and other journals scoffed at his great picture, the *Morning Post*, while deploring the over-yellowness of the *Ulysses deriding Polyphemus*, described it as “a magnificent conception, possessing extraordinary merits in execution”. The opinion of the *Morning Post* was shared by the *Sun*; while *The Times*, in a long and eulogistic note on the picture and its gorgeous sky, said that there was



*From the painting in the National Gallery*

**ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS**

By J. M. W. Turner, R.A.



no artist living who could exercise anything like the magical power which Turner wielded with so much ease; that the atmospheric effects in the *Ulysses and Polyphemus* were wonderful and delightful, and that it was much easier to criticise and decry such pictures than to produce their fellows.

Constable, who showed at the Academy his large *Hadleigh Castle* (322), and a study of a cottage, *Landscape* (9), was not without admirers. The *Morning Chronicle*, for example, thought his *Hadleigh Castle* a noble picture, "in his peculiar but forcible style". His method of imparting "dewy freshness" to his landscapes was nevertheless severely criticised. The *Gentleman's Magazine* complains of Constable's "disagreeable custom of communicating to his scenes, the appearance of having been scattered over, whilst the colouring was fresh, with a huge quantity of chopped hay. It is an execrable taste, having no resemblance to any appearance in Nature—this artist's standard of excellence". The *Times*, while praising both Constable's landscapes, thought the effect of each was impaired by his habit of scattering white spots over them; and the *London Magazine* and the *Athenaeum* imply that Turner had noticed, and ridiculed, the practice. The *Athenaeum* quotes a rumour that Turner compared the spots to splashes from a ceiling in course of whitewashing; and this is supported by the *London Magazine*, which, after a paragraph in praise of Callcott's picture, *The Fountain: Morning*, goes on to say:

*Landscape* (9). J. Constable. What a contrast to Callcott, and yet but for that accursed bespattering with *blanc d'argent*—or whitewash-splashing as Mr Turner will have it—how excellent! Mr Constable persists in his manner, yet, as he goes on, somehow or another, he contrives to improve; his effects are more vigorous and masterly than ever, and "excepting as before excepted", perfectly natural.

Lawrence believed the exhibition of 1829 to be indisputably the best that had ever been held at the Royal Academy and that his full-lengths of the Duchess of Richmond (102) and the Marchioness of Salisbury (193) were perhaps the finest he had painted. Besides the full-lengths, he contributed six other

portraits to the Academy, including one of Southey, which was not altogether successful and was retouched considerably after its return to his painting-room. On the Sunday after the opening day the pictures in the Academy were shown at a second, and particularly exclusive, private view, "to a considerable number of Peers and their Ladies, with other branches of the Nobility". To this fashionable crowd Lawrence acted as guide, and was eloquent in his praise of Wilkie's pictures and of Callcott's landscape. In the course of the afternoon he announced to the company that on the preceding day, at the sale of Lord Gwydyr's pictures at Christie's, Claude's *Rape of Europa* had been purchased by the King, and that from the same collection the Directors of the British Institution had bought Sir Joshua's *Holy Family* and Gainsborough's *Market Cart*.

*The Holy Family* and *The Market Cart* were soon afterwards presented by the British Institution to the National Gallery, which had acquired its first Gainsborough, the gift of Lord Farnborough, two years before. This was *The Watering Place* (109), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777, and described then by Walpole as "the finest landscape ever painted in England, and equal to the great Masters". *The Market Cart*, presented by the British Institution, is a much later work and was not begun until 1786, two years before Gainsborough's death.

Another picture of interest was received by the National Gallery a few days after the sale of Lord Gwydyr's collection at Christie's. This was Copley's well-known *Death of Chatham*, at present hanging in the House of Lords, which Lord Liverpool, when Prime Minister, had acquired at Alexander Davison's sale. Lord Liverpool, who paid a thousand guineas for the Copley, always told his friends that such a picture ought not to be in his possession but in that of the public, although he was apparently disinclined to part with it during his lifetime. He died on December 4th, 1828, and five months later his brother, who succeeded to the title, wrote the following letter to Lord Farnborough, who was a Director of the British Institution, as well as a Trustee of the National Gallery:

Grosvenor Street

May 15, 1829

My dear Lord

In conformity with the intentions of my late Brother may I request you to signify to the Committee of Directors of the British Institution my intention of presenting to them, to be placed in the National Gallery, the picture of the Death of the late Lord Chatham, painted by Copley,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

Liverpool.

Several sales of interest took place this year, among them that of the collection of Mr George Hibbert, which contained Turner's *Abingdon*, now in the National Gallery (No. 485). The *Morning Chronicle* of June 15th, in reporting the sale, says of the *Abingdon*: "This picture was purchased by the artist himself, who, very prudently, having the means, always attends sales to keep up the price of his works". The sale of the collection of Mr Thomas Emmerson (who took Cosway's house in Stratford Place when the artist vacated it in 1820) was held on May 1st at Phillips' rooms in New Bond Street. It was preceded by an evening reception at which the pictures were shown. This was largely attended by fashionable people, because it was known that part of the Emmerson collection had been sent to Carlton House for the King's inspection.

On June 29th the remaining works of Bonington were sold at Sotheby's. Lord Lansdowne and Sir Thomas Lawrence attended the sale to bid, and, according to the accounts in the newspapers, there were keen contests for the various lots. "The sale", says the *Athenaeum*, "produced altogether £2250, and the avidity which was shown to possess the simplest work left by the deceased, and the prices to which his most important productions were raised by competition, were quite remarkable. Memoranda for his own use, the mere tracings of the artist, were anxiously bid for and run up to extravagant prices."

It is, however, doubtful if the Bonington sale proved as successful as the newspaper reports imply. The large painting, *Henry the Third of France*, which had been so much admired at

the Academy in 1828, though badly hung, is mentioned as having been sold for eighty guineas, in the priced catalogue reprinted by M. Dubuisson. In reality it was bought in. The bidder to whom it is credited in the catalogue is Colnaghi, and as Colnaghi was the nominal purchaser of no fewer than forty lots at the sale, it is not improbable that some of these also were bought in on behalf of Bonington's father, who owned the collection.

The great sale of the year, so far as popular interest was concerned, was that of the vast collection of paintings and drawings by Benjamin West. This sale, entrusted by West's sons to George Robins, commenced on May 22nd, and was heralded by flowery advertisements. It included all, or nearly all, the pictures painted by West at Windsor for George III. "Our present Monarch", said Robins in his preliminary announcement, "was graciously pleased to restore to Mr West's family these precious gems; they include the sublime composition, *Moses receiving the Laws*, *The Universal Deluge*, and *The Crucifixion of our Saviour*. The remaining ones are all appropriate for altar-pieces." Robins mentions among the other attractions of the sale the vast *Christ Rejected by the Jews*, for which he said West refused an offer of £10,000. The *Morning Post* said, in an article published on May 20th:

The approaching sale of the renowned collection of pictures by Mr West has produced a greater degree of public excitement than any event connected with the Fine Arts that has occurred, since the founding of the Royal Academy, in the establishment of which the late illustrious President had so marked an influence. The gallery in Newman Street during the whole of last week was visited by many of the most distinguished personages, and on Monday and yesterday, the crowds of rank and fashion that assembled there between the hours of two and six, almost precluded a sight of the pictures. On Friday the sale will commence, and it is understood that agents from America and from various parts of Europe have arrived in London expressly to procure some of the larger works for foreign galleries. The admirable *catalogue raisonné*, which we strongly suspect has received the great aid of Sir Walter Scott, has, we understand, already run through five editions.

Sir Walter, however, had nothing to do with the compilation of the catalogue, which was the work of W. H. Pyne, the artist-

author. Accounts of the sale describe Newman Street as blocked with carriages, and the auction room crowded, although there was no admission unless half a crown was paid for a catalogue. Among the bidders were Lord Egremont, who bought two pictures; Lord Amherst, Lord Lismore, and that well-known collector, George Watson Taylor, M.P. The Academicians present included Sir Thomas Lawrence, Hilton, Pickersgill, Jackson, Ward, Westmacott, Collins, Shee, ETTY, Phillips, and Bone, the enamel painter. Bone was present to bid, not for himself, but as the agent of Joseph Neeld, M.P., the inheritor of most of the vast wealth of Philip Rundell, the famous silversmith, who had died two years earlier. Neeld, who is said to have bought more pictures than anyone else in the room, no doubt acquired at this sale the self-portrait of West which he presented to the Royal Academy in 1830. This portrait is still at Burlington House.

According to the published statements, West's pictures realized altogether 19,137 guineas, which included 3000 guineas for *Christ Rejected* and 2000 guineas for *Death on the Pale Horse*. These, the largest and most important pictures in the collection, are described as purchased respectively by Mr Smith and Mr W. Kershaw. Eight hundred and fifty guineas were paid for the *Death of Nelson*, of which it was said at the sale that nearly all the figures represented were portraits of officers who fought on the ship and sat to West by his particular desire. The *Hagar and Ishmael*, realised only fifty guineas. This was the picture that caused so much disturbance in 1803 when West sent it to the Academy although it had been exhibited there before. With the pictures were sold West's house in Newman Street, with painting rooms and stabling, a large plot of ground, and the fine galleries built by the artist's sons for the exhibition of their father's pictures after his death. This property, held on a lease renewable every fourteen years for ever, at a ground rent of £9. 12s., was sold in one lot for 4800 guineas.

To West's sons and heirs, Raphael and Benjamin, the sale of the pictures must have been intensely disappointing. They realized nothing like the prices expected, or what they could

have been sold for, while West was alive. *The Times* reporter thought that the rural pictures, and some of those painted at Windsor for George III, were "literally given to the public", and although it does not seem to have been suspected at the time, it is certain that, as in the case of the Bonington sale, some of the more important lots were bought in.

"The *Christ Rejected*", said the *Gentleman's Magazine*, when recording the West sale, "and the other large picture, *Death on the Pale Horse*, are, we believe, bought for exhibition in America." This is what was understood at the time, and as both pictures found their way to the United States, the belief became common that they were acquired in 1829 by American purchasers at the prices named. But they did not go to the United States until some years after the West sale, and John Sartain, the English engraver, has thrown light on their history during the intervening period. Sartain, who settled in Philadelphia in 1830, and spent the remainder of his long life in that city, tells in his *Reminiscences of a Very Old Man* the story of the acquisition of the two pictures by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, to which they have belonged for a great many years.

Sartain says that *Death on the Pale Horse* was acquired by the Pennsylvania Academy in 1835, through the agency of Colonel Childs, whose representative in London was Mr Bacon. Sartain, who possessed Bacon's letters about the transaction, says: "At the time of the purchase in London the canvas had been removed from the stretcher, and was rolled up, and appeared to belong to Raphael West, but was not actually in his possession. Mr Bacon surmised that it was held for a loan". The *Christ Rejected* was presented to the Academy by the widow of Joseph Harrison of Philadelphia, who bought it in London. It was first seen there by a picture-restorer of Philadelphia, named Richardson, who, when walking in Rathbone Place, saw a notice in a shop window to the effect that West's great picture of *Christ Rejected* was within and for sale. He made enquiries and found that the picture was rolled up and could not be shown without trouble and the payment of a fee. Richardson, therefore, took no more steps in the

matter, but on his return to Philadelphia, he spoke of the picture to Mr Harrison, who saw and bought it when in London soon afterwards.

The information supplied by Sartain and the fact that the *Christ Rejected* and the *Death on the Pale Horse* were exhibited by West's sons for some time after the sale, seem to indicate that neither picture had found a purchaser. Others, no doubt, were also bought in, for Raphael West, if he and his brother cleared more than ten thousand pounds each by the sale (as they did nominally), would surely not have been obliged to appeal twice to the Royal Academy for pecuniary assistance. It would be interesting to know what has become of West's numerous pictures. They are rarely seen in sales at Christie's or elsewhere.

On May 30th, a few days after the West sale, a collection was dispersed at Christie's, described as formed by Samuel Kilderbee of Ipswich, the life-long friend of Gainsborough. It included several portraits and landscapes by Gainsborough, and one picture of particular interest—*The Mall, St James's Park*, which is now in America. *The Mall*, however, is not known to have been in the possession of Samuel Kilderbee, and was probably the property of his son and heir, Samuel Horsey Kilderbee, M.P., by whom the collection was sent to Christie's in 1829. The value of this picture must now be estimated in tens of thousands of pounds, but the reserve placed upon it when sent to the auction room in 1829 was only a hundred and twenty pounds. It realized £183. 15s., and was bought by Henry Bone, presumably for Joseph Neeld, M.P., in whose family's possession it remained until 1916.

One Associate of the Royal Academy was elected this year, on November 3rd. The painter-candidates were not a distinguished body and included no artist of eminence, except Linnell, whose non-election to membership of the Royal Academy was the cause of much criticism of that body in later years. On this occasion neither he nor any other painter received serious support, and in the final ballot Cockerell, the architect, was successful by a great majority of votes—twenty-three against five for H. P. Bone.

In December the *Spectator* announced the death of William Cribb, and the severance thereby of an interesting link with Sir Joshua Reynolds. During Sir Joshua's later years William Cribb was his picture-framer and occasional business agent. He was the proud possessor of a portrait of Sir Joshua, presented to him by the artist in 1790; and of one of his palettes, the gift later of Lady Thomond, Sir Joshua's niece. The portrait, with the palette set in the lower part of its frame, realized two hundred guineas when sold at Christie's in 1871.

This portrait was sold as part of the estate of William Cribb, the younger, who had carried on for more than thirty years the business founded by his father, of whose connection with the artists of the past he told many tales. One of these—*Gentlemen-Connoisseurs in Painting*—appeared in print in *Willis's Current Notes* in 1857. It concerns Noël Desenfans, to whom we owe the existence of the Dulwich Gallery. Desenfans believed himself to be a fine judge of pictures, but he was deceived, not only in the instance described by Cribb, but also by copies of Old Masters, bought by him as originals, although actually the work of Ibbetson. He was well acquainted with Sir Joshua, who thought little of his opinions, and became so weary of his eulogies of the dead artists and his depreciation of the living, that he determined to give him a lesson.

Sir Joshua, therefore, instructed his assistant, Marchi, to make an exact copy of a Claude which hung above the mantelpiece of the dining-room at Leicester Fields—a picture which was the object of general admiration and the theme in particular of constant praise by Desenfans. The copy was then dried and smoked to give it an appearance of age, and placed in the frame of the original picture. At this point the assistance of Cribb was called in. He was informed by Sir Joshua of the trick that was to be played upon Desenfans, and given a letter which might be shown to the "gentleman-connoisseur", in spite of an injunction to secrecy which figured in the postscript. This letter, which the younger Cribb did not quote in his article in *Willis's Current Notes*, still exists. It runs as follows:

Dear Sir

Go to my house and tell George to deliver to you a picture which hangs over the chimney in the blue chamber, and get it lined and varnished, which it much needs as it has not been moved for thirty years. It is a copy after Claude; if it were original it would be worth a thousand pounds, and as a copy, I should think it is worth half. At any rate, I will not sell it under two hundred guineas; if you cannot sell it at that price, let the handsome frame it has be new gilt, and let it be hung up in the parlour by the time I come to town.

Yours sincerely

J. Reynolds.

P.S. Don't let anybody know to whom the picture belongs.

It was relined and placed, in the original frame, in a prominent position in the back part of Cribb's shop, then No. 288 High Holborn. Two or three days afterwards, Desenfans, who also dealt with Cribb, came into the shop, and seeing the picture, exclaimed at once, "Why, you have got Sir Joshua's Claude"! Cribb said he did not think so, and allowed him to see Sir Joshua's letter about the relining. Meanwhile Desenfans eyed the supposed Claude with admiration, never doubting that it was the picture from above the mantelpiece, and certain from his own judgment that it was an original, despite Sir Joshua's denial. He expressed a strong desire to become its possessor, and asked Cribb to approach Sir Joshua in the matter, but on no account to mention his name.

To sharpen the appetite of the would-be purchaser, Sir Joshua remained silent for a week, every day of which Desenfans called to know if an answer had been received, and to look again at the picture, which, he said, would require careful cleaning. Sir Joshua wrote at length to say that, although he was in no way desirous of selling, he would let the gentleman have it for two hundred pounds. Desenfans at once gave a cheque for the amount, which was forwarded to Sir Joshua, who pretended then to have learnt for the first time the name of the purchaser. He returned the cheque with a polite letter in which he stated that the picture was only a copy made by his assistant for

practice, and expressed his surprise that so consummate a judge of Old Masters as Mr Desenfans should have been so easily deceived. Sir Joshua made no secret of the success of his stratagem, which caused an estrangement between him and Desenfans, who never knew that Cribb was implicated.

Other recollections of the great Sir Joshua were revived this year by the publication of some information about a fine portrait-group by the master which had long been lost to sight. The *Literary Gazette* said on August 22nd:

We had the pleasure last week of seeing a large and remarkably fine picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds which has been as it were "raised from the dead". It is the property of the Earl of Westmorland, but has been for many years lying neglected among lumber of various kinds, and when discovered was in so deplorable a state (the surface being in many parts cracked and the whole obscured by dirt) that the noble Earl doubted the expediency of any attempt to restore it. Fortunately he consulted Sir Thomas Lawrence on the subject. Sir Thomas recommended that it should be put into the hands of Mr Dunthorne, of Grafton Street, Fitzroy Square, who, himself a clever artist, and familiar with the nature of oils, varnishes and pigments, has devoted much of his time to the recovery of old pictures. The result has been highly gratifying.

The picture is a composition of three whole-length figures. One is a portrait of the Hon. Henry Fane (uncle, we believe, to the present Earl of Westmorland) the others are portraits of his guardians, Mr Blair, and Mr Inigo Jones—a descendant of the celebrated architect. Mr Fane and Mr Jones are seated in a garden alcove, with a table before them. Mr Blair is in a standing attitude, and is looking out of the picture. The veteran Northcote, who has seen the group since its resuscitation, is delighted with it; and the more so, as he recollects having varnished it for his friend and instructor, Sir Joshua, more than fifty years ago.

The Reynolds thus successfully restored is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, to which it was presented in 1887 by Mr J. Pierpont Morgan. John Dunthorne, to whose hands it was entrusted, had been the pupil and assistant of Constable, who helped to set him up in business as a picture-cleaner. He was the son of John Dunthorne of East Bergholt, Suffolk, the plumber and glazier and amateur artist who was the companion of Constable in his youthful attempts at painting. To the Dun-

thornes are addressed some of Constable's letters quoted in his biography by Leslie. They do not appear to have been connected with the Dunthornes of Colchester, a father and son who both contributed to the Academy exhibitions of the eighteenth century.

Sir Thomas Lawrence made what was to be his last appearance at a Royal Academy meeting on December 10th, the anniversary of the institution's foundation. He was re-elected to the Presidential chair without opposition and addressed the students after he had distributed the prizes, which were awarded on the same evening. The successful students included Maclise, who gained a minor award, and Richard Cockle Lucas, long afterwards credited with the modelling of that famous wax bust of Flora, which was bought for a great price by the German connoisseur von Bode and deposited in the Museum at Berlin as a fine example of the work of Leonardo da Vinci.

Lawrence, who had been on terms of very intimate friendship with Mrs Siddons, and had been engaged in turn to two of her daughters, was at this time more than half in love with her niece, although he was sixty and she only eighteen. The niece was Fanny Kemble, who admitted that the painter's attentions had almost turned her head. She had just made her first appearance on the stage and was now, in December, enjoying a great success as Belvidera, in Otway's *Venice Preserved*. Lawrence advised her about her dresses, attended all the performances of the play, and after each of them sent the young actress a letter, full of delicate and detailed criticism.

Her success as Belvidera was extraordinary, but Tom Moore, who went to Covent Garden to see her in the character, thought her acting only clever, not great or touching. He looked carefully round the house during the pathetic parts but saw no signs of weeping among the audience. "Sir Thomas Lawrence", he said, "was in the orchestra, full of anxiety and delight; and I made a point, whenever he looked our way, that he should see me clapping enthusiastically."

A letter from Lawrence, written on December 17th, shows how

earnestly he endeavoured to interest his friends in the actress. The letter, addressed to a lady of title whose name has not been divulged, commences with an explanation about the abandonment of a sitting. After apologizing for his neglect in not answering a note from the lady, Lawrence writes:

If the loss of a great pleasure may be considered as some punishment for the offence, it was inflicted on me last night in the depriving me of admission to your box at the close of the last performance, to have enquired of your Ladyship and of Lady. . . the impression you received from it. I hope your hands were moving as rapidly and heartily as hers, and from the same just and generous impulse. Miss Kemble is to me the finest genius that has appeared since Mrs Siddons; and had she the same superior advantage of person and countenance (although the latter in herself is fine and of great and varied power) might almost equal her. There were two or three bursts of passion as natural and fine as any that I remember from that Muse.

At the time that Fanny Kemble was playing *Belvidera*, Lawrence was making a drawing of her, well known from the lithograph of it by R. J. Lane, A.R.A., Gainsborough's great nephew. The drawing was made for Fanny's mother, Mrs Charles Kemble, and to its execution and to that of the lithographic reproduction Lawrence devoted much time and thought. According to a contemporary writer who was acquainted with Lane, Lawrence worked upon the stone himself. "In the progress of this drawing," says the writer, "Sir Thomas took exceeding interest, and Mr Lane worked upon it for several days at his house and under his eye. Sir Thomas added frequent touches and was delighted with the process. This beautiful print may therefore be considered as affording a specimen of the touch of a master-hand upon a material hitherto strange to him."

## CHAPTER X

1830

LAWRENCE intended to paint a full-length portrait of Fanny Kemble as Juliet, for which she had arranged to sit early in the New Year, but the portrait was never begun. On January 2nd Lawrence was indisposed, but managed, nevertheless, to fulfil an engagement to dine with Sir Robert Peel. For two or three days his health seemed to improve, but he had a relapse on the 6th, and died on the 7th, from the effects of excessive bleeding, according to his biographer, D. H. Williams.

On January 21st, a fortnight after his death, Lawrence was buried in St Paul's Cathedral, beside Reynolds and West, his predecessors in the Presidential office. On the evening before the interment, his body was conveyed to Somerset House and placed in the Model Room, which was hung with black draperies and lighted by wax candles. It was watched all night by Lawrence's old servant, who had begged to be allowed this privilege. Thirty-two mourning coaches and eighty private carriages followed the hearse to St Paul's, and all the shops along the route were closed until the procession had passed. The control of the great crowds between Somerset House and Temple Bar was undertaken by Sir Robert Peel's newly organized Metropolitan Police—its first duty of magnitude. Peel himself was one of Lawrence's pall-bearers.

The cost of the funeral was considerable, of course, and as most of it was provided out of the estate of a man who was insolvent, Lawrence's executor, Archibald Keightley, narrowly escaped serious trouble. The following letter, written forty years after the funeral by Keightley, who was then solicitor to the

Charterhouse, explains the circumstances. Keightley's correspondent was Solomon Hart, the Royal Academician:

Charterhouse

*March 23rd, 1870.*

My dear Sir

I have been prevented longer than I intended from performing my promise of sending you some particulars which I mentioned to you as to Sir Thomas Lawrence.

A few days after his death Mr Howard and Mr Abraham Cooper called upon me with a resolution of the Royal Academy, expressive of a strong wish that the funeral should be a public one, and saying that they would pay the expenses of their own members. The funeral was, in compliance with this, public, and was conducted by Mr Thornton, son-in-law of Mr Bacon, R.A. the sculptor. I know that Mr Thornton avoided much expense in the arrangements at St Paul's, which would have increased his profit, but the expense amounted to £1000, of which the Royal Academy found £250 for their share and the remainder was paid out of the estate of Sir Thomas Lawrence.

My accounts as executor were passed before the Master in Chancery, and this item of £750 for the funeral was the only one questioned. It was objected to by the Master, who told me that after a consultation with the other Masters, he felt himself unable to allow more than £250, and if the difficulty had not been got over by all the creditors assenting to the allowance of the remaining £500, I should have had to pay it.

Yours truly

A. Keightley.

S. A. Hart, Esq.

Keightley's memory played him false when he said that the Academy provided £250 of the cost. The President and Council agreed to pay "the expense incurred under their own roof and by the attendance of their own body." The amount of this was £152. 9s. od.

Lawrence died a poor man, as Keightley's letter indicates, but the reason of his poverty has never been satisfactorily explained. His London life of forty-two years was a period of unbroken prosperity, and at the time of his death he was overwhelmed with commissions for portraits at prices that were for the time enormous. He was a bachelor who lived a simple life and rarely

entertained; he is not known to have gambled or speculated, or to have had any entanglements with women that might have involved him in financial difficulties, and yet he was always borrowing from friends or moneylenders. Sometimes he was in desperate straits. Samuel Rogers one night found Lawrence at his door in a condition of alarming agitation. He had come to beg the banker-poet to save him from disgrace, for unless a few thousand pounds could be raised within twenty-four hours, he was a ruined man. He could offer as security drawings which could be pledged or sold. Rogers relieved him the next morning by obtaining a sufficient advance from Lord Dudley and Ward, who, fortunately, was no loser eventually by the transaction.

George IV, who gave Lawrence more commissions than anyone, could never understand what he did with his money. "I have paid him £24,000", said the King, "and have not yet got my pictures. The Duke of Wellington is £2800 in advance to him. All the world is ready to employ him at a thousand pounds a picture, and yet I am told he never has a farthing."

The friends of Lawrence have attempted in several ways to account for his impecuniosity. Campbell, the poet, who was acquainted with his affairs, and intended to write his biography, thought that his difficulties were largely due to carelessness about money matters, and that if he had been more circumspect he would have been a rich man. Campbell says he was utterly heedless of accounts:

I could not credit the fact unless I had had it from the best authority, that he kept his books so imperfectly as to have omitted a debt of five hundred guineas due to him from one of the noblest families in the kingdom; and it is probable that he omitted other sitters who were not so punctilious as that family in volunteering the payment of the unclaimed debt to his executor.

Sir Martin Archer Shee, who had been associated with Lawrence since the days when they were both Academy students, believed that his troubles were almost entirely due to his passion for collecting drawings by Old Masters. He appears to have had no idea how much he had spent in forming his wonderful collection until a few days before his death, when he happened to

meet Hogarth, the picture-dealer. They talked of the drawings, and Hogarth, who in a published letter has left a record of their conversation, expressed a hope that a collection which had cost £70,000 would never be dispersed. "I have taken care", said Lawrence, "that it never will be. But why do you say it cost so much? You are mistaken." The dealer in a few minutes calculated the cost of only the important items, and the painter then admitted the correctness of his estimate. Lawrence believed that the precautions he had taken when drawing up his will would ensure the preservation of his collection as a whole, but he was wrong.

Lawrence applied to all kinds of people for money and the extent of his borrowings will never be known. That he had considerable dealings of the kind with John Allnutt of Clapham, the well-known collector and the first patron of Constable, has been revealed by Anderdon in some of the notes in his Academy catalogues. He says, when mentioning Lawrence's portraits of Mrs Allnutt, that when the painter died he was in debt to Mr Allnutt to the extent of £5000—"but by insuring and keeping up insurances upon the life of the obligator, all sums due with interest were received in full. This I had from Mr Allnutt himself".

John Wilson Croker, who several times obliged Lawrence with loans, some of which were not repaid, believed that he was kept poor by his great generosity to women. Croker says that he knew two or three to whom Lawrence was very liberal. In this connection no names have ever been mentioned, but it is known that Lawrence gave assistance to young artists in whom he was interested, even when he was pressed for money himself. He appears to have been always ready to take trouble in helping people although they had no claims upon him. Of this a remarkable instance is the assistance he gave to Audubon, the famous American naturalist and painter of birds and animals, who visited England in 1826 to prepare for publication his well-known *Birds of America*. In 1826 Audubon was unknown to fame and was seen by Lawrence for the first time when he

called upon him with a letter of introduction from Thomas Sully, the American artist, who had studied in London some years earlier. Yet, although Audubon was a stranger, Lawrence went out of his way to give him help that made possible the publication of his book.

The naturalist called upon him at half-past eight in the morning, at which hour he was assured he would find Lawrence already at work, as he did. Lawrence read his letter and said that he was glad to meet any American introduced by his friend Sully, and took the visitor into his painting-room. Of his interview with Lawrence and its sequel, Audubon gives an intimate account that is worth quoting. He says in his memoirs:

The room in which Sir Thomas painted, to my utter astonishment, had a southern light. Upon his easel was a canvas (kitcat) on which was a perfect drawing in black chalk, beautifully finished, of a nobleman; and on a large easel a full-size portrait of a lady represented in the open air. On the latter he went to work. I saw that his palette was enormous, and looked as if already prepared by some one else, with the various tints wanted, and that he had an almost innumerable number of brushes and pencils of all descriptions. He now glazed one part of his picture, and then re-touched another part with fine colours, and in a deliberate way which did not indicate that he was in any haste to finish it. He next laid down his palette, and, turning to the chalk drawing upon the unpainted canvas, asked how I liked his manner of proceeding. But as no complaint could be made by me to such an artist, I merely said that I thought it the very quintessence of his art.

A waiter then entered and announced that breakfast was ready. He invited me to remain and join him in his "humble meal", which I declined while we walked downstairs together. I remarked on the very large number of unfinished portraits I saw, to which he mildly replied: "My dear Sir, this is my only misfortune. I cannot tell if I shall ever see the day when they will all be finished". Insisting on my remaining to breakfast I went in; it consisted of a few boiled eggs and tea and coffee. He took the first and I the last; this finished, I bid him good morning. It was ten o'clock when I left and as I passed out three carriages were waiting at the door.

The many brushes noticed by Audubon were probably but a portion of Lawrence's stock of such implements. Seventeen hundred brushes were among the contents of his painting-room catalogued after his death. Lawrence went to Audubon's

lodgings to see his work. He did not say much about the pictures but asked the prices of several, and then, says Audubon:

To my surprise he said he would bring a few purchasers that very day, if I would remain at home. This I promised, and he left me very greatly relieved. In about two hours he returned with two gentlemen to whom he did not introduce me, but who were pleased with my work. One purchased the *Otter caught in a Trap*, for which he gave me twenty pounds sterling, and the other *A Group of common Rabbits*, for fifteen sovereigns. I took the pictures to the carriage which stood at the door, and they departed, leaving me more amazed than I had been by their coming.

The second visit was of much the same nature, differing, however, chiefly in the number of persons he brought with him, which was three instead of two. Each one of them purchased a picture at £7, £10, and £35, respectively, and as before, the party and pictures left together in a splendid carriage with liveried footmen. . . . Without the sale of these pictures I was a bankrupt before my work was seriously begun, and in two days more, I should have seen all my hopes of the publication blasted; for Mr Havell (the engraver) had already called to say that on Saturday I must pay him £60. I was then not only not worth a penny, but had actually borrowed five pounds a few days before, to purchase materials for my pictures. But these pictures which Sir Thomas sold for me enabled me to pay my borrowed money and to appear full-handed when Mr Havell called.

Unlike Sir Joshua, who made little use of chalk or charcoal but began his portraits with the brush, Lawrence drew, with the point, most exact and careful preliminary studies of those who sat to him. It was one of these studies that Audubon saw upon his easel. Lawrence's laborious method has been described by Wilkie, who says:

He would draw the portrait in chalk, the size of life, on paper; this occupied him but one sitting, but that sitting lasted nearly one whole day. He next transferred that outline from the paper to the canvas. His picture and his sitter were placed at a distance from the point of view, where, to see both at a time, he had to traverse all across the room, before the conception which the view of his sitter suggested, could be proceeded with. In this incessant transit his feet had worn a path through the carpet to the floor, exercising freedom both of body and mind; each traverse allowing time for invention, while it required an effort of memory between the touch on the canvas and the observation from which it grew.

Wilkie says that although Lawrence's likenesses were celebrated as the most successful of his time, they were "more exalted and more refined upon the originals" than those of any other painter. He aimed at seizing the expression rather than copying the features, and he told Wilkie that even in the majestic head of Mrs Siddons there were parts and forms which did not appear to belong to Mrs Siddons, and should therefore be omitted in her portraiture. From one distinguished man whom he painted, he had no less than forty sittings for the head alone.

Lawrence mentions the painters by whom he was most influenced in a letter to Mrs Jameson, written not long before his death, in which, as she says, "he gives his own view of his own style of art". He tells her—contrary to something she had stated—that the Flemish school, with the exception of Rembrandt, had been the object of his imitation less than any other:

My thoughts have almost invariably been devoted to Sir Joshua, and generally, the Italian schools—Raphael, Correggio, Titian, even Parmigianino. An admirer of the very finest works of Vandyck, and acknowledging the consistent ability of his pencil, I have been less his votary than perhaps hundreds since his time of distinguished taste and talent (Gainsborough for instance) to whose judgment in other cases I should justly bend. Rubens has been infinitely more the object of my admiration, but, as you know, presents very little as example for portrait painting.

Sir Joshua continues to be more and more my delight and my surprise! Rembrandt has another, and still higher, place in my affection (but this, I am aware, demands some private explanation). In my men then, I have thought of both, and of Titian and of Raphael as the subjects approached their style. In women, of Sir Joshua, Raphael, Parmigianino, and Correggio. In children, of Sir Joshua and the two latter. In my portraits of Kemble and Mrs Siddons, of the higher Italian school. In my *Satan calling up his Legions*, of the Sistine Chapel; but though rejecting (as he himself did for me) any charge of servile imitation of Fuseli, acknowledging, and in grateful homage to the noblest poetically inventive genius that perhaps our modern ages have produced, that it owes its conception to his character of composition and design. The whole of it (its adaptation of proportion and style excepted, which were formed on the antique) was long and carefully studied from the finest living models I could secure.

The large house in Russell Square, in which all the portraits of Lawrence's later period were painted, appears to have remained untenanted for some time after his death. Haydon gives a depressing account of its appearance, in an entry in his *Diary* made on May 25th, 1832:

I passed Lawrence's house. Nothing could be more melancholy or desolate. I knocked and was shown in. The passages were dusty, the paper torn, the parlours dark; the painting-room where so much beauty had once glittered, forlorn, and the whole appearance desolate and wretched—the very plate on the door, green with mildew.

I went into the parlour, which used to be instinct with life! "Poor Sir Thomas—always in trouble", said the woman who had care of the house. "Always something to worrit him." I saw his bed-room, small, only a little bed; the mark of it was against the wall. Close to his bed-room was an immense room (where was carried on all his manufactory of draperies, etc.) divided, yet open over the partitions. Here his assistants worked. His painting-room was a large back drawing-room, his show-room a large front one. He occupied a parlour and bed-room; all the rest of the house was turned to business.

The "immense room" mentioned by Haydon was nearly fifty feet in length. It was formed by Lawrence six years before his death, by converting the two upper storeys of the house into one large apartment. This, however, does not appear to have been used when, in 1854, the house became for a time a palace of the arts. Dorchester House, Park Lane, now demolished, was then being built for Mr Holford, who had purchased more than a hundred and twenty pictures by Old Masters for its adornment. Until the house was finished these pictures were hung in Lawrence's former painting-room, show-room and parlour. The parlour was devoted entirely to portraits, prominent among which was Vandyck's full-length of the Abbé Scaglia, which was sold for thirty thousand guineas when the second part of the Holford collection was dispersed in 1928. The house in Russell Square which for a time sheltered so many masterpieces was pulled down in 1910.

The election of a new President of the Royal Academy in place of Lawrence was fixed for January 25th, and its result

was awaited with no little curiosity by the general body of artists. Wilkie was a strong favourite, and the *Morning Chronicle*, in its issue of January 26th, actually announced that he had been elected on the previous evening. This was a mistake, for the choice of the Forty had fallen upon Martin Archer Shee, who was elected by eighteen votes to six for Beechey, two for Wilkie, and one each for Phillips and Callcott. "We expect much from Shee's self-devotion and chivalrous sense of honour", said Constable, in a letter written to his friend Samuel Lane immediately after the election. Of its popularity there was no doubt, although Haydon declared that the choice of Shee—"the most impotent painter in the solar system"—was one of the worst blows ever inflicted on the dignity of the Academy. Haydon thought that the honour should have been bestowed upon Wilkie, who in point of professional ability was immeasurably superior to Shee. But the other qualities necessary for the President of an institution like the Royal Academy were not possessed by the shy and awkward Wilkie, who had no experience of public speaking and was never at his ease in society.

Shee was a man of affairs, a scholar and an orator, and the "self-devotion and chivalrous sense of honour" spoken of by Constable were recognized by most of his fellow Academicians, some of whom could remember his relentless exposure of Farington twenty-five years before and knew that his honesty of purpose was beyond reproach. "Without a movement on my part," said Shee, "without an attempt to employ the smallest influence, in or out of the Academy, knowing that I have neither wealth nor power, or influence with the great, and that I have never basked in the sunshine of Royal favour—in spite of all this, they have made me President."

One powerful member of the Academy, Chantrey, seems to have taken for granted that Shee would be chosen, for he called upon him a few days before the election to ask if he would agree to be appointed President for only one year, and for other Academicians to succeed him in rotation. Chantrey cited the

example of the French Academy, but failed altogether to impress Shee as to the wisdom of the proposed change of procedure.

No one can claim that Shee was a distinguished painter, but the full-length of "Gentleman" Lewis, which represents him in the National Gallery, is a spirited and vivacious portrait of that popular eighteenth-century actor. The portrait was bequeathed to the Gallery by Lewis's son in 1849, but it had not descended to the donor from his father, and was, in fact, never in Lewis's possession. Shee painted it for himself, because of the interest of the sitter, as Reynolds and Gainsborough painted their portraits of Mrs Siddons. He was proud of the portrait of Lewis, which was exhibited at the Academy in 1792, when he was little more than twenty-two years of age, and at the time of his election to the Presidentship it was still hanging in his house in Cavendish Square—the house that he took over from Romney when that artist retired.

A writer of 1830, when commenting on Shee's election, refers in flattering terms to the full-length of Lewis:

The grace, spirit and life of this portrait have not been excelled even by Mr Shee's most mature performances. With a natural predilection for so perfect a work of his younger pencil, he has not allowed any golden temptation to induce him to part with it. It adorns his gallery in Cavendish Square, and when we enter the room and our eye meets the animated likeness of one of the most animated actors the stage ever held, we almost expect to see the buoyant step with which he appears moving, advance towards us, and the gay smile that parts his lips immediately succeeded by some lively sally of his ever ready wit.

While making arrangements for the election of a President the Academicians had no suspicion that letters were passing between Peel, then Home Secretary, and Lord Farnborough, which might have led to radical changes in the constitution of their society. The letters are printed in the private correspondence of Sir Robert Peel, edited by Mr C. S. Parker. The first, from Peel to Lord Farnborough, is dated January 20th, 1830, five days before the election:

The King has an impression that it would be desirable to alter the constitution of the Royal Academy with the view of placing at its head some distinguished amateur of the arts. He wishes, I understand, to have our opinions on the subject.

Writing confidentially to you, I have no hesitation in saying that my present opinion is decidedly averse to this scheme.

The election of a President comes on, on Monday next. Surely it would be very ungracious to step in on Monday with a notice from the King that he contemplated an alteration, the effect of which would be to transfer the nomination to himself. Seeing too that the result of the present mode has been to place in the chair such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence, I see no public ground on which the King could be advised to alter it.

Replying on the same day, Lord Farnborough said:

I entirely agree in every word you have written. Surely the question one asks upon any proposition to alter an existing establishment is—"Has the old one worked well?" If it has, why try a new experiment? In the present case the existing institution has answered its purpose. The experiment would be very doubtful indeed.

The correspondence was brought to a close by a letter from Peel to Lord Farnborough, dated January 27th, from which the following is an extract:

The King was pleased to appoint Wilkie his principal painter, and I think he was right in disposing of that appointment independently of the President of the Royal Academy. You have no doubt heard that the Academy elected Shee.

I told the King that I had conferred with you on his proposal of himself nominating a nobleman to be President of the Academy; that we thought His Majesty stood so well with the artists of this country, and that he was so universally admitted to be the greatest patron that art ever had in England, that it would not be prudent to risk the excitement of other feelings. The King at once assented and said, "Well, perhaps we had better not meddle with the Royal Academy". He was particularly good-humoured.

In coming to this decision the King was influenced by the opinion of William Seguier as well as by those of Peel and Lord Farnborough. John Seguier, speaking to a friend many years afterwards about this incident, said: "My brother had a difficult business to prevent George IV from remodelling the Royal Academy. He talked about it a good deal at that time".

The first Academy meeting of importance at which the newly-elected President took the chair was held on the evening of February 10th, when an Academician was elected in the place of George Dawe. Eastlake, who had received but two votes at the election of the preceding year, was now successful, but only by a single vote—fourteen, against thirteen given to Arnald the landscape painter. In the preliminary voting Gilbert Stuart Newton had two votes and Edwin Landseer only one.

This year the Hanging Committee for the summer exhibition should have been composed of Constable, James Ward and Baily, the sculptor. But as Ward was ill and Baily declined to serve, their places were taken by Abraham Cooper and Etty respectively. Although the members of the Committee appear to have worked together in harmony, there was some friction during the arrangement of the exhibition. Constable, in a letter written to Pickersgill while the hanging was in progress, speaks of Abraham Cooper as most impartial in his judgment, but says that he and Cooper had a skirmish with William Collins, whom he calls "a selfish fellow". Collins was a member of the Council, and as such, had a voice in the selection of the pictures though not in the hanging of them, and this year the Council unceremoniously rejected one by Constable. It is not likely, however, that this unfortunate incident had anything to do with the friction between Constable and Collins.

The rejected Constable, *Water-Meadows near Salisbury*, now in the Sheepshanks collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was one of four pictures sent to the Academy by the artist in 1830. At that time all the pictures sent for exhibition by outsiders were passed in review before the Council, which rejected those regarded as inferior. The three members of the Council who comprised the Hanging Committee then took over the remainder, from among which, and from the works by members, they formed the exhibition. As an Academician, Constable was entitled to have his pictures hung without

question, but by some accident the *Water-Meadows near Salisbury* was placed among the works sent in by outsiders, and was brought before the Council in its turn—and rejected. This incident, noticed in the memoirs of Frith and Redgrave, is not mentioned by Leslie in his biography of Constable, probably because some of the Academicians concerned were living at the time the book was published. But according to Anderdon he talked of it without reserve.

Anderdon attended the sale of Constable's pictures held the year after his death at Foster's auction rooms, and tried in vain to secure the *Water-Meadows near Salisbury*, the history of which he knew. When speaking of his failure to Leslie, he said: "I had been bidding on from ten pounds, hoping to walk off with such a prize, when I heard some one whisper—'Why Sheepshanks is bidding'. I was then the last bidder, but I gave way at once to a competitor with such a long purse".

"You would never have got it in any case", replied Leslie. "I have tried in vain to obtain it, and have offered in exchange to paint for Sheepshanks anything he liked. But I can't shake him. He clings to it all the more, because he knows it was thrown out by the Academy Council as 'a nasty green thing'. Then one of them recognised it as the work of Constable and there was a change of opinion—it was at once to be admitted. But Constable, who was himself on the Council, would not permit this. 'It has been properly condemned as a daub', he said. 'Send it out.'" Anderdon says that Leslie's story was confirmed by F. R. Lee, R.A., the landscape painter.

Glimpses of some of the artists present at the Academy Private View of 1830 are given in an article published in the *Dublin Literary Gazette* of May 15th, and signed "A Lady". The writer, who attended the Private View and claimed to be "intimate with some of the mighty in art", describes Wilkie as a "thin, spare man, timid in his address and retiring in his manner. His eye is grey and small—restless—and at times, though not often, brilliant. He receives compliments with embarrassment and is ever at a loss what to say in return".

Of William Collins, she says that to see him no one would set him down as a genius. "He is simply a gentleman, mild and pleasing, without foppery, affectation, or even peculiarity of any kind." After praising Turner's *Palestrina*, she turns to his personality. "What an odd little mortal he is, wizened, and not even so good-looking as Etty, who would be the ugliest man in London but for one simple cause—his pure unaffected good-nature that renders him the darling of all the students of the Royal Academy, and irradiates his countenance until you wonder you ever thought him less than beautiful."

The description of Turner by "A Lady" is not in agreement with that of the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, who, meeting the great landscape painter at this time, said of his appearance: "That he should be such a poetical being would, we think, never have been pronounced by Lavater or Spurzheim. Mr Turner is a tubby little man and has every mark of feeding well, and 'sleeps o' nights'".

Newspaper criticisms of the exhibition were this year more numerous and lengthy than usual. *The Times* criticized not only the pictures but the methods of hanging, and in the latter respect made charges against the Academicians that it is impossible to credit. After protesting against the regulations which permitted each Academician to have eight pictures hung in good places, *The Times* continued:

It is quite notorious that the members have gone to Somerset House, when on the Hanging Committee, to place their own eight pictures, and have left the rest to be placed by the porters and servants. We do not mean to say, though we are told to the contrary, that this is a general practice, or that there are not men in the Academy who conscientiously fulfil their duty. What we have stated we know to be a fact, and it is very discreditable and unbecoming to the followers of such practices.

That porters or other servants should ever have been allowed to hang pictures at the Academy, except in the presence of members of the Hanging Committee and by their instructions, is unthinkable. The paragraph in *The Times* must have been written by some one wholly unacquainted with the strict

laws which regulate the proceedings of Academy Hanging Committees, and the jealous scrutiny of their actions by the rest of the body. Read literally, the paragraph implies that members of the Hanging Committee have been known to go to the exhibition room and place their own pictures on the walls, and to leave the others—including the works by their fellow Academicians—to be hung by the carpenters!

*The Times*, in common with most of the other journals, said some severe things about Turner, and blamed those who had permitted two of his canvases to appear on the walls. But the critics were obliged to admit that in other pictures he showed himself a master. Those condemned were No. 7 *Pilate washing his hands* (now at the National Gallery, Millbank), and No. 226 *Jessica*. “Mr Turner”, said *The Times*,

with all his faults, gross, glaring and provoking as they are, has some landscapes which no artist of the present day, and few of those of other times, could surpass. At the same time it should be observed that he has a picture which he calls *Jessica*, an incomprehensible daub, equally disgraceful to him and to the Society who have permitted him to disfigure their walls.

The critic of the *Morning Herald* thought that the Academy exhibition was good upon the whole, but that its character was injured by the inclusion of certain anomalous compositions, the work of a Royal Academician. It was always an unpleasant task to use condemnatory language when describing the productions of the painter and the sculptor, but the artist who makes himself liable for such remarks must accept the consequences. “As long as he confines the vagaries of dullness or conceit within the sanctuary of his dwelling we do not notice them, but when we see such puerile attempts at historical composition and portraiture placed in a national exhibition to which the public pay for admission, it becomes our duty to protest.” The writer then proceeds to protest against—and to praise—the pictures by Turner:

Had the Royal Academy Council the power of veto, it doubtless would have rejected *Pilate washing his hands* and that thing called *Jessica*, to make

room for pictures of more talent and less pretension. We pass over two other productions by the same artist in which gaudiness is the only reason for their being looked at, to his, No. 432 *A Fishmarket, the Sun Rising through a Vapour*. This is worth all the rest of his pictures now here, it is simple and natural in the design and colouring, and is in the chaste, silvery style of one which was in the possession of Lord de Tabley some years ago and was greatly admired.

Turner's presentment of Shylock's beautiful daughter found no admirers anywhere. Anderdon, writing in 1830, says of the *Jessica*: "I hear from those who visit Petworth every year that this picture made old Lord Egremont throw out a caution to Turner. 'Turner, I want a picture painted when you have time. But remember, none of your damned nonsense.'" Jerdan, who visited the Academy exhibition in company with Wordsworth, describes in his memoirs the effect of the *Jessica* on the poet:

We went together to Somerset House in the year when Turner hung up a little picture of Jessica, doubtless the most worthless and extravagant whim with which he ever amused himself (as I am convinced from his own mouth he frequently did, laughing in his sleeve) by foisting on these walls. "Did you ever see anything like that?" said Wordsworth. "It looks to me as if the painter had indulged in raw liver until he was very unwell." And this was a perfectly applicable and just critique.

Eight portraits by Lawrence were included in the exhibition, and one of them, *Lady Belfast* (71), is described by the *Sun* as the most beautiful work of its kind on the walls. According to *The Times*, the *Lady Belfast* and all the other portraits by the dead President were unfinished, but this statement was inaccurate so far as No. 321, *The Earl of Hardwicke*, was concerned. The following letter to Lord Hardwicke shows that this portrait, one of the last painted by Lawrence, was finished and that the artist was proud of it:

Russell Square

July 29, 1829

My Lord

I have now the pleasure to acquaint you that I have entirely completed your portrait. Since your Lordship and Lady Hardwicke saw it here, I have, with the exception of the face, gone over the whole of the picture, and, believing that a background which gives appropriate scenery to the dress and

supposed situation of your Lordship, would be more advantageous than the plain background which it had, I have made the addition and find it an obvious improvement. It has now a consistent richness of effect, and though I confess it may be too natural to me to be too partial to my latest works, I think I am still justified in pronouncing the picture to be (as certainly it ought) one of my best productions. I take the liberty to offer my respects to Lady Hardwicke, and have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obliged and very devoted servant,

Thomas Lawrence.

Lawrence's portrait of Tom Moore (136), which was one of the last he commenced, was never finished and, according to the *Atlas*, it was unlike the original. "It has but one defect," said that journal scornfully, "it is anything but a perfect likeness either as to character, figure or expression." On the other hand, Anderdon thought it excellent, sketch though it was, and hoped that it would not be ruined by any attempt to finish it by another hand. Anderdon expresses this opinion after describing how he had contrived to obtain unlawful admission to the exhibition of 1830 when it had been closed for the season. "The exhibition at Somerset House", he said, "had closed the Saturday preceding my return from Spain. On Monday, in the despair of disappointment, and more than doubtful of success without any interest to aid—and not an hour to spare for any—I knocked at the gate, met with a good-humoured janitor, and by the help of half-a-crown, was admitted to the exhibition and had the beautiful suite of galleries to myself."

To Wilkie were given the two best places in the exhibition, for his full-length of the King in Highland dress, and his picture of the Royal entry into Holyrood. The portrait, very low in tone, and "a trial of Rembrandt all over", to use the words of the artist, pleased his friends, but did not altogether satisfy some of the newspaper critics. *The Times* thought that the King in his Highland dress looked like an old snuff-taker, and the *Morning Chronicle*—even more irreverent—said that Wilkie's portrait had been described as "the beau ideal of the Laddie who stands outside the tobacconists'".

The charges of impropriety in subject and treatment made against Etty in 1828 were now renewed in connection with his picture, No. 331 *Candaules, King of Lydia, shows his wife by stealth to Gyges* (now in the Corporation Art Gallery, Oldham). But the *Literary Gazette*, which reproves Etty for his lapses into "debasement of sensuality", speaks more severely to James Ward for exhibiting such a picture as No. 135 *Venus rising from her Couch*:

It is badly drawn, badly coloured, and what is much worse, indelicate. Why are the modest and lovely young females who daily grace the rooms of Somerset House with their presence, to have their feelings outraged and blushes called into their cheeks, by a work like this, placed too in a situation in which it cannot escape near notice? We are sorry to say that it is not Mr Ward's only offence in the present exhibition, and that he is not the only offender.

Constable's contributions to the exhibition were No. 19 *Dell Scene in the Park of the Right Hon. the Countess of Dysart, at Helmingham, Suffolk*; No. 94 *Landscape*; and No. 248 *A Heath*. The last was a view of Hampstead Heath, with a glimpse of London in the distance. The critic of the *Morning Post* classed Constable with Lee and Callcott. "Their names", he says, "will always reflect honour on the English School. We should like to see their productions at all times placed together." The *Dell Scene* of Constable was thus described in the *Morning Post*:

No. 19. *Dell Scene in the Park of the Right Hon. the Countess of Dysart, at Helmingham, Suffolk*. By J. Constable, R.A. A wooden bridge over a rocky cataract, tall overhanging trees with densely thickening foliage as they recede in the distance; a sky of deep blue with white fleecy clouds and some figures and cattle well placed for effect—these form the materials for the performance under our notice; and by all who know the capabilities of the artist, it will be admitted that he could not have a more favourable opportunity for the display of his eminent powers. He has not been insensible to his fame in the production he has sent forth. It has none of the spottiness with which there has been too much ground for reproaching the style of Mr Constable of late. It has all the richness and truth of Gainsborough's best efforts without his tameness, and in brilliance and variety of colour it may vie with many of the landscapes of Rubens.

This year witnessed the beginning, in the *Morning Chronicle*, of the persecution of Constable mentioned in the preface. In

his review of the Academy, published on May 3rd, the critic of that journal says of the landscape painter:

This artist manages by a fantastic and coarse style of painting, for his colours appear to be laid on with a knife rather than with a brush, to produce powerful effects and sometimes a remarkable degree of natural truth; but he has not improved in art as he has in fortune, to which latter he certainly owes the obsequiousness of the Academy and the long struggled for R.A. Though not without great merits, much impaired by silly affectation and various clumsy efforts at singularity, he, as a painter, falls far short of Callcott and Lee in their respective excellencies. . . . Effect, *quocunque modo*, is the idol of Constable, both in his painting and himself, and both would be more respected with less coarseness.

To the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* and his attacks on Constable, I shall have occasion to refer again in succeeding chapters. The attacks were continuous until 1834, in the *Morning Chronicle*, then one of the most widely read of London daily newspapers, and until 1835 in the *Observer*, a journal of some influence, although it had not the high standing of the *Observer* of to-day. Constable's enemy was the critic of both journals, and both allowed him ample space in which to publish his comments, frequently personal and sometimes scurrilous, on the artists of the time. Many of them suffered, but the principal object of his abuse was Constable, who must somehow have given mortal offence to the critic after the close of the Academy exhibition of 1829. For in the notice of that exhibition from the same hand which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, Constable is praised and his *Hadleigh Castle* described as a noble picture. It is curious that neither Leslie nor any other writer on Constable mentions the criticisms in the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Observer*, which attracted considerable attention at the time they appeared and more than once provoked ferocious counter-attacks in other journals.

Just before the close of the Academy exhibition an artist who had frequently been the subject of Constable's sarcasm left England for good. This was John Glover, who had made more money than any landscape painter except Turner. His work was extremely popular in England, and, like that of Constable,

it had been honoured in France by the bestowal of a gold medal by the State. Nevertheless, for some unknown reason, Glover had made up his mind to emigrate to Tasmania and sailed from the Thames, taking £60,000 with him, according to one journalist. He lived for nearly twenty years in Tasmania and painted many pictures. In 1835 he sent to London and exhibited in Bond Street more than fifty studies in water-colour of the scenery and birds of the colony, and of the feasts and dances of the natives. The exhibition also included a picture of his house in Hobart Town—a white house in a garden glowing with roses and geraniums.

Haydon was not represented at the Academy this year, but he showed some of his pictures at the Western Exchange, which was between Old Bond Street and the Burlington Arcade. The pictures included several lent by various owners, and the *Death of Euclès* which was disposed of by raffle on April 4th. There were fifty tickets at ten guineas each, and the winner—after a tie with the Duke of Bedford and Mr Strutt—was Mr Nathaniel Smith of Dulwich, who allowed his prize to remain in the gallery until May 19th. It was then seized, together with the other pictures, by the proprietors of the Western Exchange, to whom Haydon was in arrears with his rent. Haydon appealed at once to Mr Smith, to whom he sent this desperate letter:

May 19th, 1830

Nathaniel Smith, Esq., Dulwich

My dear Sir

I am sorry to tell you *I am rapidly approaching ruin*. I wished to send the Euclès to you directly, but Messrs Hern and Co. will not suffer either Lord Egremont's Alexander, your Euclès, Mr Kearney's Napoleon, or Mr Prideaux's Solomon to leave the room *till the arrears are paid up*.

I want you to see Mr Hern, Carlisle Street, Soho. The mortification and disgrace I feel at this communication is not to be expressed. Lord Egremont will be written to also, no time must be lost.

I am ruined quite. Law expenses and no employment will bring the highest down and they are again bringing me.

The arrears are £48—I propose each to take a portion, till I can pay it.

It is dreadful, absolutely, but there is no remedy—the pictures should be immediately released.

I have closed the exhibition and shut up the rooms.

I am too full of misery and harass to know hardly what I am writing. With seven children, and two boys beginning life—one in the King's service—and my wife approaching confinement again! Depend upon it we shall be overwhelmed. However, take care of your own picture immediately, and do try to see Mr Hern early (before eleven tomorrow). At present say nothing.

Yours ever faithfully

B. R. Haydon.

The following letter written next day by Haydon shows that Nathaniel Smith saved his picture by prompt action:

My dear Mr Smith

May 20th, 1830

I can't express the delight I feel that you have got possession of the picture. Just after I wrote yesterday, I was torn up by the roots for the schooling of my eldest boy. It is no use to complain. I make a handsome income, but law expenses and old debts press me to the earth.

If I was to die this moment I would thank God! I have kept my word concerning *Eucles*. Be assured, till the next picture, the wife in *Eucles* is the best thing I ever painted in my life.

B. R. Haydon.

The letter was written from the King's Bench prison. Immediately after Haydon's return from the Western Exchange on the 19th, he was arrested for a debt of £15. 16s. and remained in confinement for two months.

While in prison he lost a friend by the death of George IV, on June 26th. Haydon, who declared the King to have been "as thoroughbred an Englishman as ever existed in the country", believed that he would have received ample employment from him, if his wishes had not been perpetually thwarted. It is certain that George IV loved pictures and encouraged artists, and there was a great deal of speculation as to the tastes of his successor in the same direction. The King was buried on July 15th, and William Collins, writing in his diary on the 16th, says: "To-day the new reign may be said to have commenced. Seguier says our new Sovereign has great views

respecting the arts". The following paragraph, widely circulated in the newspapers soon after the accession of William IV, suggests that Seguiet was mistaken: "At Windsor lately a picture was shown to his present Majesty by one of the attendants, who observed that the late King had admired it very much:—'Ay', said His Majesty, 'it seems pretty—I daresay it is, my brother was very fond of this sort of nicknackery. Damned expensive taste though. Take it away, take it away'".

The accession of William IV gave *The Times* an opportunity of renewing the attack on the Academy made in its first review of the exhibition. On July 20th *The Times* published an article in large type and nearly a column in length, in which it was stated that by the command of the King a letter had been sent to the President of the Royal Academy asking in what manner the arts might best be promoted. The writer of the article expressed a fervent hope that any suggestions from the Royal Academy would be received with extreme caution and subjected to the severest scrutiny, and repeated, with slight modifications, the statement that the Hanging Committees allowed the porters to place the pictures. The writer then proceeded as follows:

The public is to be informed that the talent of an artist has little or nothing to do with his election into the Academy. The pride and self-respect which are the natural concomitants of genius will be more likely to keep a man out of the Academy than bring him into it; and if among that body there are some individuals of incontestable ability, they have got there, not in consequence of their talents, but in spite of them.

Whoever determines to become a member of the Academy must bid adieu without remorse to the spirit and feelings of a gentleman. He who cannot squeeze himself into every avenue, whether dirty or clean, and is inexpert at the games of manœuvring in all their contemptible intricacies—who shrinks from the tortuous processes of sycophancy, flattering, canting, wheedling, begging, coaxing and crying (for even this last expedient is known to have been employed with the happiest effect)—he who is unable to do these things has little chance of obtaining a seat at the Royal Academy.

But whatever be the means, how glorious is the end! The successful candidate is no sooner installed in the sacred office than he is able to make a full atonement to his humiliated feelings, by wreaking on others the same tyranny

which had been exercised upon himself, and several of them have been heard, with laudable candour, to avow their resolution of doing so.

The remedy for these evils is simple and obvious. A gallery should be constructed for the purpose of the National Exhibition of such extent and of such a plan as should give sufficient space to every qualified contributor, and preclude the possibility of invidious and partial arrangement.

There is no record in the Royal Academy Minutes of any letter or message from the King at this date, and *The Times* article appears to have attracted no attention except from Haydon, who read it joyfully the day after he came out of the King's Bench prison.

Sir Thomas Lawrence directed in his will that his picture by Rembrandt, *The Wife of Potiphar accusing Joseph*, should be offered to George IV for £1500, but the offer was not accepted, perhaps because the price was regarded as excessive. Lawrence had certainly over-estimated the market value of the picture, for when Christie sold his collection of works in June the last bid for the Rembrandt was only £598. 10s. The sale revealed how strong had been Lawrence's admiration for the art of Fuseli—an admiration to which he had often given expression. His collection contained no fewer than twenty-one paintings by Fuseli, none of them small and one very large. Personal relics of the late President realized what appear to have been good prices although they did not satisfy Christie. A correspondent of the *Athenaeum* who was at the sale mentions that a mahogany palette which had belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds was bought by Constable for twelve guineas, and that the succeeding lot was Lawrence's own palette of sycamore. He says:

The latter, just in the state in which its illustrious owner left it, went for 16 guineas. Two of Sir Thomas Lawrence's easel-sticks—one of white cane, the other of black—were knocked down to some young aspirants of art for 5½ guineas each. Mr Christie was so provoked at the low price these magic rods were raising that he called out, "Is there no gentleman of the Royal Academy here? Why the very hazel-sticks of the Duke of York fetched five and six guineas each, and here are the easel-sticks of our great painter going for a trifle. Have we none of the members of the Royal Academy here?"

Lawrence's collection of drawings by Old Masters was not sold by auction, but was offered in turn, and in each case in vain, to George IV, the British Museum, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Dudley. This collection, to which I shall refer again, remained for several years in the hands of the executor, Archibald Keightley, but all Lawrence's engravings, and drawings by modern artists, went to Christie's with his pictures. Among the drawings was Cipriani's design for the diploma of the Royal Academy, which came from the collection of George Baker, a lace-merchant in St Paul's Churchyard and a well-known collector in his day. Baker bought it in 1806 at the sale of the effects of Lord Lansdowne, to whom it had been presented by Cipriani's son after the death of his father. The drawing, of which Baker was proud, occupied a prominent place among the treasures displayed on the walls of the first-floor front room of his house in St Paul's Churchyard. After Lawrence's death it passed into the possession of D. T. White, the picture-dealer of Maddox Street, who in 1847 sold it to the Royal Academy for thirty-five guineas.

George Baker died in 1811, but the drawing was still in its place in 1823 when Lawrence visited the house, then tenanted by the collector's brother Richard, who had inherited his property. Lawrence wished to buy Cipriani's design, but its owner, refusing to sell, offered it to the President as a gift. This he declined, but proposed in exchange for it to paint the portrait of Richard Baker or of anyone whom he might nominate. Baker agreed, and nominated his great-nephew, Frederick Herbert Hemming, who lived with him, and Hemming sat several times to Lawrence. Before the portrait was finished Richard Baker died and left everything to Hemming, who decided to sell the collection formed by his great-uncle George. The collection included some drawings by Raphael, which Lawrence wanted, and in exchange for them he offered to paint another portrait. To this Hemming agreed, and as the sitter chose Miss Bloxam, to whom he was then engaged. To Lawrence's surprise Miss Bloxam proved to be a distant

relation of his brother-in-law, Dr Bloxam of Rugby, and this led to a closer intimacy between the artist, the lady and her future husband. After their marriage the friendship was maintained, and at Hemming's house in Sussex Place, Regent's Park, Lawrence in his later years spent many quiet evenings of relaxation from the ever increasing strain of his work.

The memorial exhibition of Lawrence's portraits, held in the summer at the British Institution, was most successful and resulted in a profit of £3000, which the Governors bestowed upon the painter's ten nieces. George IV lent thirty-one portraits, including the twenty-one painted for the Waterloo Gallery at Windsor. Sixty others were contributed by private owners, but one portrait of great interest was missing from the collection. This was the full-length of Miss Farren, the actress, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1790 and perhaps the finest of Lawrence's early portraits. Its absence is explained by the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, who says of the ninety-one works at the British Institution:

Many others might have been had, but the offers were declined—the Governors, like little children, thinking that to play the game well, they must pick out all the Court cards. One, however, that was sought, we regret to find absent; we mean the portrait of Miss Farren, afterwards Lady Derby. This was the picture that brought Sir Thomas Lawrence first into notice, and deservedly, for it is one of great fascination. It pleased Lord Derby, however—and the pleasure was exclusively his own—to refuse the loan of it on this occasion.

Miss Farren was married to Lord Derby in 1797, and died in April, 1829, a year before the opening of the Lawrence exhibition.

The most interesting entries in the Minutes of the Royal Academy this year relate to the acquisition of the famous marble bas-relief by Michael Angelo, now in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, which was brought from Italy in 1822 by Sir George Beaumont. Sir George, writing from Rome in that year to Chantrey, said: "I have made two purchases since I have been here; one is a bas-relief by Michael

Angelo, the subject a Virgin, St John and the Infant Christ. St John is presenting a dove to the child Jesus, who shrinks from it and shelters himself in the arms of his mother. . . . Canova, with his usual kindness, superintended the packing; it is directed, through the Custom House, to Grosvenor Square, and I wish it not to be seen by anyone until my return, unless you yourself are sufficiently interested to unpack and look at it". The bas-relief is unfinished, and Sir George told Wordsworth that he believed Michael Angelo left it so intentionally, because he felt that completing it would not heighten the effect.

Watts, who was a sculptor as well as a painter, was glad that Michael Angelo had not attempted to carry his work farther than he has. "It is", said Watts, "a thing of supreme and even pictorial beauty. It is quite lovely being left with a chiselled surface, for it is incomplete according to general apprehension, but in my opinion more perfect."

After Sir George's death the bas-relief remained in Lady Beaumont's possession, until she died in July, 1829, when the baronet's cousin and heir (another Sir George Beaumont) decided to dispose of the family mansion in Grosvenor Square and most of its contents. The house and the furniture, and many pictures, including Haydon's *Macbeth*, were sold in the following June by Claridge of Curzon Street. Claridge announced in his advertisements that besides the property for sale, there would also be open to public inspection—"the far-famed and matchless Madonna and Child by Michael Angelo, bearing date 1504, which has been the admiration of all the cognoscenti of Europe".

The bas-relief was only for inspection, not for sale. It was sent a few days afterwards to Somerset House, and the Royal Academy Minutes of June 14th include the following entry: "Read a letter from Sir George Beaumont (successor) accompanying an original bas-relief in marble by Michael Angelo, presented to the Academy in fulfilment of the intention of the late Sir George Beaumont and his Lady". It was ordered at the same time that a bill of one pound should be paid, "for the carriage of the bas-relief from Grosvenor Square to the

Academy". The question arose soon afterwards as to whether legacy duty might be demanded on the new acquisition to the Academy's collection, and in view of this contingency it was decided to have the bas-relief valued by Christie. This was done, and the following is the auctioneer's opinion:

A Holy Family, unfinished sculpture in relief, the genuine work of Michael Angelo. I value the above sculpture for the legacy duty at the sum of six hundred pounds.

James Christie,

King Street, St James's Square,

*November 15, 1830.*

Sir George Beaumont paid £1500 for this bas-relief in Italy, according to statements made at the time in the newspapers. It was found afterwards that no duty was chargeable.

On June 25th the Academy Minutes record the acquisition of another interesting object from Sir George Beaumont's collection. "Mr Constable", the entry runs, "produced the palette of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which he had purchased at the sale of Sir Thomas Lawrence's effects, for the purpose of presenting it to the Academy. It had been left to Sir Thomas Lawrence by the late Sir George Beaumont, to whom it had been given by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Resolved that a silver plate be affixed to the palette with an inscription recording the above particulars." To this is added in a footnote: "The silver plate was afterwards supplied, together with a handsome mahogany case, by Mr Constable himself".

The fine collection of architectural casts owned by Lawrence was not included in his sale, but was offered to the Royal Academy for £250 by Keightley, his executor. The offer was made by the wish of Lawrence, who directed in his will that "the collection of casts which I purchased from — Saunders, Esq. for £500, I desire may be offered to the Royal Academy at the price of £250". The collection, which was brought by Saunders from Rome, was bought by Lawrence in 1823, "for fear of its being broken up and thus lost", as he tells Eastlake in an unpublished letter of that year. The casts were purchased

by the Academy in July and were presented to the British Museum in 1831.

*The Times* of September 20th contains the following announcement: "Mr Hazlitt, the author of several well-known publications, died on Saturday". This is the whole of the leading newspaper's obituary of the great essayist, of whom none of the other daily journals had much to say. Three years earlier the death of Blake had been passed over by them entirely without notice. But Blake's career was afterwards described and his qualities discussed in the weekly and monthly periodicals, and this was the case also with Hazlitt, whose character and achievements were sketched and criticized at length in the literary reviews. Stress was laid upon his love of painting, the profession he at first practised, but afterwards abandoned. A writer in the *Athenaeum* of October 2nd, after speaking sympathetically of Hazlitt's "troubled, many-coloured life", goes on to say:

He studied as a painter, and the deep awe which the works of Titian and other masters of the art struck into his mind, paralyzed his hopes and he abandoned his profession in despair. The faces of Titian's portraits haunted him, and when he spoke of them it was as though he had discoursed with high spirits and had bent his eyes on some strange, supernatural light. . . . He copied only the pictures he adored because they would be as records in absence, and he wrote, not for inspiration or the hope of high achievement, but for "hard money" and a painful subsistence.

It was to make a subsistence that he turned to literature, and in it attained success, though always looking back to the past and thinking of the art he had practised with joy and sacrificed with regret. In his essay *On the Pleasure of Painting* he recalls the golden days when he was handling the brush in Paris. "It is now", he says, "seventeen years since I was studying in the Louvre (and I have long since given up all thoughts of the art as a profession) but long after I returned, and even still, I sometimes dream of being there again—of asking for the old pictures—and not finding them, or finding them changed or faded from what they were—I cry myself awake!"

Hazlitt exhibited only two works, both at the Academy. In 1802 he showed there a portrait of his father and in 1806 a portrait of a man unnamed. He was fond of copying, and Washington Allston mentions in a letter that he had seen a copy of a Titian by Hazlitt that was very well done. A half-length of Charles Lamb by him is in the National Portrait Gallery.

John Landseer, when mentioning Hazlitt in his journal, *The Probe*, complained of his strong prejudices against modern art as compared with that of the Old Masters, and of his indifference to contemporary painting. But in his published criticisms Hazlitt shows himself highly appreciative of such artists of his own times as Wilkie and Turner. He praises portraits by George Dawe and William Owen, and was particularly attracted by the work of William Collins. On the other hand he condemned the later landscapes of Gainsborough, and thought that the *Blue Boy* was the only good portrait by that master in an exhibition that contained his full-length of Dr Schomberg, and his *Mrs Sheridan and Mrs Tickell* now at Dulwich. Hazlitt does not seem to have admired Sir Joshua as he is admired to-day. In his review of the Angerstein collection, he says, after praising the portrait of Lord Heathfield: "Nevertheless, Sir Joshua's pictures, seen among standard works, have (to speak it plainly) something old-womanish about them. By their obsolete and affected air they remind one of antiquated ladies of quality, and are a kind of Duchess-Dowagers in the art—somewhere between the living and the dead".

Only one Associate of the Royal Academy was elected this year, on November 1st. The successful candidate was William Frederick Witherington, the landscape painter, who defeated William Wyon, the sculptor and medallist, by fifteen votes to seven. The other candidates included George Cruikshank, John Linnell, and Clarkson Stanfield.

## CHAPTER XI

1831

AT the beginning of 1831 Lord John Russell's famous Reform Bill for extending the Parliamentary franchise was the universal theme of conversation and discussion. The cry for reform was heard everywhere and heard not only in political but in artistic circles, for the attacks were renewed upon the administrations of the Royal Academy, the National Gallery, and the British Institution. One of the leaders of these attacks was the anonymous critic of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Observer*, the enemy alike of Constable and of Seguier. Of the last named, in connection with his management of the British Institution, and in a notice of its spring exhibition, the critic said on February 1st: "A picture-dealer, though suffered to cater for Royalty, is not the proper person to have any rule in these matters. It is well-known that Mr Seguier is no favourer of modern art, for the simple reason that the profit on sales is small in comparison with that which flows into the pocket of the dealer, agent, or puffing connoisseur, out of the sums extracted from those who have the folly to submit to be bamboozled in the purchase of Old Masters, or such as are passed off for them".

The fashion for Old Masters was one of the principal causes of the dissatisfaction with the management of the British Institution, a body which was unpopular among artists although it had destroyed the monopoly of the Royal Academy and had been the means of selling modern pictures to the value of more than £75,000. Artists had not forgiven the rich amateurs who founded and directed the Institution for sacrificing in part the interests of the modern exhibitions in favour of those of the Old Masters. This, they declared, was done in other ways than the

cutting short of the period of the modern exhibitions to increase that of the old. "We allude", said one writer, "to the drugget on the floor, to the studied lights by awnings at the skylights, and to the brass rail round the room to protect the works from profane fingers. Now it is known that these are a great advantage in setting off the old pictures and we cannot see why they should be denied to the moderns. The grey drugget is of especial service, as the bare floor does great mischief."

It was hinted in some of the complaints about the British Institution that good places could be obtained on the exhibition walls by suborning the underlings, into whose hands power had been allowed to slip by the inertness of the aristocratic Founders and Directors. Of these, Lord Farnborough was still the most prominent and the most intimately connected with Seguier in the management of the affairs both of the British Institution and the National Gallery. Artists often appealed to him on this account, and he suffered much at their hands, as he complains in a letter to his friend George Cumberland:

You know that I love the arts, and much of the pleasure and happiness of my life has been derived from them, but you have no idea how much ill-will I have incurred from being supposed to possess much more power to assist artists than really belongs to me, and when I have felt myself quite unable to do what has been desired, it has often been imputed to want of inclination—not, as really was the case, to want of means, and I have not escaped a good deal of abuse in consequence, for I need not say that an unsuccessful artist is not the most placable man alive.

I shall, however, render the arts all the service I can, and I think the British Institution has already done a good deal in extending the number of admirers of the Fine Arts. If it has produced this effect it has done the cause a good service.

As he justly claims in this letter, Lord Farnborough rendered much service to the arts, especially in connection with the foundation of the National Gallery, to which he afterwards presented Gainsborough's famous landscape, *The Watering-Place*, and bequeathed his collection of pictures. He appears to have been generally liked and respected, although his veracity is challenged in a spiteful anecdote recorded by John Mitford in

an unpublished note of his conversations with Samuel Rogers. "He said," writes Mitford, "on my asking him if he knew Lord Farnborough—'Yes, we were very intimate. I bought that picture—Reynolds' *Cupid and Psyche*—of him for £200. I used to go to Bromley Hill, his seat in Kent, and slept in Pitt's room. We differed and parted. Fox said of him that he never opened his mouth but to tell a lie.'"

Lord Farnborough had been the principal unofficial adviser of George IV in the matter of buying pictures, and for a time served William IV in the same capacity. The King was a sailor and the first commission given by him through Lord Farnborough was for views of the principal British naval ports—Portsmouth and Plymouth—to be painted by an artist who had also been a sailor, Clarkson Stanfield. The commission owed its origin to the fact that Stanfield, who was a member of the Society of British Artists, broke the rules of that body (and was abused for so doing) by sending a picture to the Royal Academy in 1830. The picture, No. 284 *Mount St Michael, Cornwall*, is said to have "riveted the admiration" of the King when he visited the Academy and made him anxious to possess examples of its painter's work. It was stated in 1831 that the King intended to give the representations of Portsmouth and Plymouth to Greenwich Hospital, but they are not now in the Greenwich collection.

On February 10th Edwin Landseer was elected a Royal Academician in place of Lawrence. Landseer, destined to become the most popular English painter of his time, had received only one vote at the election of 1830. He was now returned by a sweeping majority—twenty-three votes to eight for George Arnald, the landscape painter. Landseer was only twenty-nine at the time of his election, and Arnald, for whom this was the last chance, was exhibiting at the Academy fourteen years before his successful rival was born.

Arnald's first appearance at the Academy was in 1788, the year of Gainsborough's death, and the year in which Beechey believed that he was elected a Royal Academician! He makes

this surprising claim in the following letter, written soon after Landseer's election, in which he took part. The letter is addressed to Mr Lynch Cotton, son of the Ordinary of Newgate:

Harley Street

*April 19, 1831.*

Sir

I should have answered your favour sooner, but I could not find my diploma, nor have I yet been able to put my hand on it. However, on referring to a list of the Council I find the first year I served on it was 1789, so that I must have been elected an Academician on the 10th of February, 1788, that being the only day for the election of Royal Academicians, and the new members are placed on the Council the year following.

If you are about to publish any work in which I can be of the least advantage in regard to information of any sort within my knowledge, you may, without ceremony, command me.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. Beechey.

Beechey, of course, was altogether wrong in his dates. He was not elected an Associate until 1793, and then had to wait five years before attaining the higher rank in 1798. It is unfortunate that his correspondent was unable to approach him and to obtain the information so freely offered. Beechey's recollections and anecdotes would have been valuable, and might have thrown new light upon the proceedings and surroundings of the eighteenth-century artists. They might have cleared up some of the mystery that surrounds the departure from London of Gilbert Stuart, who was Beechey's intimate friend. Lynch Cotton had no occasion to call at Harley Street, for he was not writing a book and only wanted Beechey's autograph. He was a collector of autographs, and obtained those of nearly all the Academicians by writing to them to ask the dates of their elections to membership. His collection was disposed of by Sotheby in 1856 and some of the letters written in answer to his appeals still figure occasionally in sale catalogues.

A kindly action by Beechey is mentioned in the Academy

Minutes a few days after he had written his letter to Lynch Cotton. The pictures for the summer exhibition of the Royal Academy had been arranged by Constable, Bone and Eastlake, and the members had assembled at Somerset House for the purpose of varnishing or re-touching their works, when it was found that some alteration was necessary. The Minutes of April 25th contain the following statement:

It having been discovered that a portrait of Lady Falkland (a daughter of His Majesty) had been accidentally placed in an obscure situation in the exhibition, and Sir William Beechey having consented to withdraw one of his portraits of the same size to make room for it. Resolved, that it is expedient under the circumstances to suspend the existing law which prevents any alteration of works after the members are admitted to varnish.

Fanny Kemble, in her *Records of a Girlhood*, gives some further information about the moving of Lady Falkland's portrait. She says that on the night of April 25th, after a visit to the theatre with some friends, Gilbert Stuart Newton had supper with them. Newton, whom she speaks of as a clever, entertaining man, a charming artist, and something of a dandy, was then an A.R.A. He had been varnishing at the Academy in the morning, and at supper told amusing stories about the hanging of the pictures. "The poor dear King", says Fanny Kemble, "lets himself, his family, and his family animals, be painted by whoever begs to be allowed that honour. So when the pictures were all hung the other day, someone discovered in a wretched daub close to the ceiling, a portrait of Lady Falkland (the King's daughter) and another of His Majesty's favourite cat, which were immediately lowered to a more favourable position, to accomplish which desirable end, Sir William Beechey removed some of his own paintings." The portrait of Lady Falkland (Amelia Fitz-Clarence) of which Newton spoke so contemptuously was by Andrew Morton. There is nothing in the Academy Minutes about a portrait of a cat.

In the reviews of the Academy exhibition this year, much space was given to notices, generally flattering, of such artists as George Jones, Briggs, Abraham Cooper and Richard Westall,

who are no longer in favour. Callcott was much praised. "We know of no landscape painter, with the exception of Turner," said one of the critics, "who has so much poetry and air in his views as Mr Callcott, and he excels Turner in finish."

Constable contributed two landscapes, *Yarmouth Pier* (123) and *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (169). Of the first, little was said, but the Salisbury picture was the subject of some admiration and more reproof. The *New Monthly Magazine*, after praising it, said: "Mr Constable is emphatically an *English* painter; no artist can paint English scenery, properly so-called, with so much feeling and truth". The *Times* thought that Constable had ruined a good picture by his trick of adding touches of light, and described No. 169 as: "A very vigorous and masterly landscape which somebody has spoiled since it was painted, by putting in such clouds as no human being ever saw, and by spotting the foreground all over with whitewash". The writer adds, sarcastically: "It is quite impossible that this offence can have been committed with the consent of the artist". The *Gentleman's Magazine* professed to believe that Constable had painted the Cathedral and its surroundings after a snowstorm, and could not understand why a quotation from Thomson's *Summer* was appended to its title.

From the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* Constable received abuse of the kind that he was to endure for several years. Speaking of the arrangement of the exhibition, in which the landscape painter took part, this critic says that Eastlake also was to have been a hangman, "but like the Sheriff, deputed the amiable duty to one of more congenial feelings—Mr Constable. They are the antipodes, Mr Eastlake being all refinement, delicacy and good taste". He compares Eastlake's *Italian Family* (78) to an air, sung with all the grace of an Italian, and Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral* to "Old Towler" roared out by a coalheaver. "It is impossible", he says, "to class amongst landscapes of the first order, Mr Constable's coarse, vulgar imitation (169) of Mr Turner's freaks and follies; a mimicry of his extravagancies to attract notice, but without any of their

pictorial feeling and clear indication of a masterly genius to betray the attention bestowed. Grievous it is to see in the latter so much *charlatanerie*—in the former, it is contemptible.” In a footnote the critic says:

We have found out Mr Constable’s secret, he is a Cornelius Ketel; see Harding’s excellent catalogue of portraits, No. 153: “Cornelius Ketel took it into his head to lay aside his brushes and to paint with his fingers only; and at length, finding those tools too easy, undertook to paint with his toes”. We rather suspect that Turner is sometimes a little inclined to this failing, but never so perfectly *in toto* as Mr Constable this year.

An indirect attack on Constable and the naturalistic school of landscape painting of which he was a forerunner, was made this year in an article on “Painters, Critics and Sir Thomas Lawrence”, published in the *New Monthly Magazine*. The writer, whose eyes were blind to the beauty of “everyday fields and farms”, scoffs at the artists who “go out into the country and copy a haystack ‘from nature’, the gable end of a cottage, a hayfield or a cornfield. . . . Painting requires an apprenticeship, and if the highest walks be attempted it requires both sensibility and power; but as to the everyday fields and farms and blacksmith’s shops, the pigs and poultry and so forth, that we see defacing the walls of the exhibitions, we apprehend that they demand precisely the same quality of genius our upholsterer exhibits when he paints our door in imitation of oak or mahogany”.

Turner showed seven pictures at the Academy of 1831, some of which are mentioned in a letter written by Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A., in the summer of that year, to a friend at Liverpool. “Only one”, said Sir Richard, “was very mad—a Medea raving in the midst of her bedevilments and incantations. You can conceive how Turner would out-Herod Herod in such matters! He had one very clever smaller work of a vessel in distress, in the distance blue lights, etc. I think Soane bought it. He had also the ruins of Caligula’s palace at Baiae, gorgeous and grand, but unintelligible to the multitude.”

Westmacott was mistaken about Soane. The picture at the

Academy, No. 73 *Life-boat and Manby apparatus going off to a stranded vessel making signal (blue lights) of distress*, was bought by Sheepshanks and is now in his collection (No. 211) at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The *Vision of Medea* (178), the work ridiculed by Westmacott, and now in the National Gallery, Millbank, was abused by most of the critics; and *The Times*, coupling it with a picture of Lord Percy and his daughters (263), said that Turner in these efforts had "disgraced the high powers that dwell in him by caprices more wild and ridiculous than any other man out of Bedlam would indulge in". Other writers spoke of these pictures in equally condemnatory terms, but all regarded them as the aberrations of a painter who at his best was of the highest class. The critics of 1831, like those of 1830, always remembered that Turner, despite his vagaries, was a great master, and this was emphasized by a writer who dealt with him in one of a series of articles on artists, published in Leigh Hunt's *Tatler*, a daily journal of four pages edited by him, and devoted chiefly to literature and the drama. Leigh Hunt was perhaps responsible for the notes on Turner, for in speaking of the *Tatler* in one of his letters, he says, "I did it all myself, except when too ill". The writer, whoever he was, suggested, perhaps sarcastically, that Turner at this time had trouble with his eyes. He says of the artist:

He is by general consent a person of eminence in his line, and in our estimation, super-eminent. He has invention, power, experience, and an elevated view of his art beyond any of his contemporaries—very much beyond any English landscape-painter whatever. We assert this notwithstanding his wilful, mad, inflamed pictures, notwithstanding his vain contempt for all opinion—notwithstanding, in short, his present disease (ophthalmia or calenture) which leads him into the most marvellous absurdities and audacities of colour that painter ever ventured on. This is very melancholy, but we trust that a timely application of blistering and phlebotomy may arrest the current of his disorder, and in the meantime we will endeavour to preserve him as he was.

Did the reader ever see the early pictures of Turner, or his drawings done in his best time, after he had cast off the pettiness of his first style and before he commenced those freaks of colour with which he is now content to amuse the public? Or did the reader ever see his *Liber Studiorum*? If not he is not acquainted with this extraordinary artist. Nothing comes amiss to him. The

temples of Jove and Cybele are not too lofty, the Dutch fishing boat is not too mean. He is not one but Legion. More sublime than Claude, less savage yet grander than Salvator; and more beautiful, if less simple, in his scenes, than are the vernal landscapes of Gaspar Poussin.

Concurrently with the exhibition at the Royal Academy, the Directors of the British Institution showed at their gallery in Pall Mall a collection of works by deceased artists, foreign and British, lent by the King and other owners of pictures. Among the lenders was Thomas Hamlet, the goldsmith, of whom the *Literary Beacon* remarked in a notice of the exhibition:

By Carlo Dolci there is a very highly finished and characteristic portrait of St John. We have mentioned this picture for more than one reason. By the catalogue it appears to be the property of "Thomas Hamlet, *Esq.*"—now we would ask any dispassionate person why this quackery is suffered to exist? Mr Hamlet is of a class of persons highly respectable, but why, because he has been successful in trade and has sense enough to buy good pictures and tact enough to sell them at a good price, is he to be dubbed an esquire? "Mr Hamlet" would read much better in the catalogue.

No reputable journal of to-day would print such a blatant piece of snobbery as this paragraph, which was directed against a man who was always generous in lending fine pictures for exhibition, and even entrusted the priceless *Bacchus and Ariadne* of Titian to the Royal Academy for the students to copy in the Schools. Nor is it possible to imagine in our own times the publication by the Gresham Committee of the following advertisement for "tenders" for the execution of what was to be regarded as a work of art:

Mercers' Hall, March 31, 1831. The Sub-Gresham Committee hereby give notice that they will be ready to receive tenders in writing for forming and fixing a statue, in Portland stone, of His late Majesty George the Fourth, in one of the niches of the Royal Exchange. The Sub-Committee will meet at Mercers' Hall, Cheapside, on Tuesday the 10th of May next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon precisely, to receive tenders and models from persons who may be willing to contract for the same. The Sub-Committee will not be bound to accept the lowest tender, nor will they pay any charge for forming models, or any other charge whatever relative thereto. Any further information may be obtained by application at the Clerk's Office in Ironmonger Lane, where

tenders and models will be received on Monday the 9th of May, between the hours of ten and four o'clock.

The death of Mrs Siddons, on June 8th, affected the world of art as well as that of the drama, for the great actress had known and given sittings to the most famous portrait painters of her time, and was herself a modeller of some skill and an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. Her portrait by Sir Joshua as the Tragic Muse, painted when she was twenty-eight, is probably more widely known than any other picture by an English artist. According to the writer of some notes on Mrs Siddons, communicated to the *Morning Chronicle* a few days after her death, Sir Joshua painted an earlier portrait of her when she was only twenty-two. There is, however, no record of this in the catalogues of Sir Joshua's works compiled by Graves and other writers. The earlier portrait, by whomsoever painted, was at the time of her death in the possession of Mr Moncrieff, the dramatic writer, and is said to have borne a strong resemblance to Fanny Kemble. In another note it was said of Mrs Siddons' manner that in very limited and private society she would throw off her taciturnity and her tragic air, and amuse the company by singing ballads into which she introduced a peculiarly dry humour. "On one occasion, at the house of her brother, Mr J. P. Kemble, the writer of this remembers Mrs Siddons singing Sheridan's ballad of *Billy Taylor* with infinite drollery."

Six weeks afterwards, in the same newspaper, appeared the following interesting paragraph about the memoirs and letters which Campbell was to include in the life of the actress he had undertaken to write:

Mrs Siddons, during many years of the latter period of her life, in her hours of leisure was employed in writing her memoirs, and at her death left sixty or seventy of what are called copy-books entirely filled with manuscript relating to herself and to dramatic history in general; from 1782, when she first appeared in the character of Isabella at Drury Lane Theatre, until she retired from the stage at Covent Garden. Mrs Siddons has likewise left many interesting letters which at different periods were addressed to her by the most eminent individuals who figured in the world within the last sixty years. All of which, together with the memoirs, have, we understand, been given

to Campbell the poet by Miss Siddons to enable him to complete the life of undoubtedly the greatest tragic actress of this or any other country.

To Campbell, as the writer of this paragraph says, the letters and other papers were entrusted. Mrs Siddons knew the poet well and liked him, and in the last year of her life was perhaps more interested in him than in any other person. There is a letter in existence sent by her to Campbell not long before her death, when she was already very feeble. Written in a trembling hand, it is to ask him to come to her house to tea. To the letter, Mrs Siddons' daughter, Cecilia, has added an entreating post-script: "We want you to talk to her". In a letter of July 6th, 1831, printed by his biographer, Campbell says: "In London I saw Miss Siddons, who gave me an address written on her mother's memorandum book, almost with her dying hand, enjoining my affection to undertake the task of her biography".

The biography was written, and was published three years after Mrs Siddons' death, when the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in reviewing with some severity "this unfortunate volume of biography", said that he had had the pleasure of perusing most of the letters placed in Campbell's hands, and regretted extremely the author's neglect of them when compiling the book. "Our disappointment", he wrote, "has been great, but we are still in hopes that Mr Campbell will be induced not to withhold from us the considerable correspondence of the lamented actress which he possesses." Campbell, however, did not publish the letters, and did not even return them to Cecilia Siddons. Apparently they have been lost, and with them, no doubt, valuable and interesting information about the actress and her friends and acquaintances. From them we might have learned something new about Gainsborough, who is unmentioned in such correspondence of Mrs Siddons as exists; and about the painting of her portrait by him in the National Gallery, of which nothing is known except, through Bate Dudley, who tells us that she sat for it in 1785.

Many corrections of statements made by Campbell in his carelessly compiled biography were published in the *Observer*

and in the *Quarterly Review* soon after its appearance. But one error was not noticed, although it is important, and has remained unchallenged until now.

When describing Mrs Siddons' failure in the part of Portia in December, 1775, after she had come to London at Garrick's request, Campbell quoted what he believed to be a notice of her acting taken from a contemporary journal. He spoke of it as "a critique on her first appearance at Drury Lane", and abused its writer as "a vile newspaper critic" and "a scribbler", but without any reason, for the passage he quoted is harmless enough. It runs as follows:

On before us tottered, rather than walked, a very pretty, delicate-looking creature, dressed in a most unbecoming manner in a faded salmon-coloured sack and coat, and uncertain whereabouts to fix her eyes or her feet. She spoke in a broken, tremulous tone, and at the close of a sentence her words generally lapsed into a horrid whisper that was absolutely inaudible. After her first exit the buzzing comment went round the pit generally: "She certainly is very pretty, but then how awkward, and what a shocking dresser!" Towards the famous trial scene she became more collected, and delivered the great speech to Shylock with the most critical propriety, but still with a faintness of utterance which seemed the result rather of an internal physical weakness than a deficiency of spirit or feeling. Altogether the impression made upon the audience by this first effort was of the most negative description.

The editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in his review of Campbell's book quotes this passage from it as "a contemporary critique", and it has been regarded as such by modern writers, most of whom mention the "faded salmon-coloured sack and coat" alleged to have been worn by Mrs Siddons. But it was not a newspaper criticism and was not written until after her death. It is only an extract from a letter, published in the *Morning Herald* on June 16th, 1831, the day following that of her funeral. The letter is signed "Octogenarian", and contains the writer's impressions (which must have been somewhat hazy after an interval of fifty-six years) of the first appearance at Drury Lane, in 1775, of a then obscure actress who was a failure and did not visit the metropolis again until 1782.

Although many portraits of Mrs Siddons were painted by

various artists, she does not appear to have given sittings to any sculptor until her youth and prime were past. That this was the case is suggested by the following advertisement, published by James Smith in several newspapers in February, 1813, when the actress was in her fifty-eighth year:

Mrs SIDDONS. Mr Smith, Sculptor, having been honoured by Mrs Siddons with several sittings has just finished a full-sized bust of that inimitable actress. It is acknowledged by her friends to present a striking resemblance to her as seen by an audience when that lady displayed her unrivalled talents on the stage. Mr Smith respectfully solicits the attention of the Nobility and Gentry, and begs to inform them that this bust, which is the only one of Mrs Siddons ever modelled from the life, may be inspected at his house, No. 57, Upper Norton Street, Marylebone.

James Smith, who was a pupil and assistant of Flaxman, is best known by his monument to Lord Nelson in the Guildhall. His bust of Mrs Siddons, which a contemporary writer described as "marked by ease and dignity, and the best likeness which has ever appeared of that celebrated actress", was exhibited at the Royal Academy and was afterwards placed in the Green Room of Drury Lane Theatre.

Of the painted portraits of Mrs Siddons, she herself appears to have preferred Lawrence's full-length (now in the National Gallery), although to her niece, Fanny Kemble, it suggested "a handsome dark cow in a coral necklace". To Mrs Siddons it was "more really like me than anything that has been done", but this was perhaps because of its associations, for she had always had a singular affection for Lawrence, whom she had known since he was a boy. The portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1804, in which year scandal connected the names of the actress and the painter, although she was then forty-nine and he only thirty-five. In the late autumn a story was spread abroad that they had left London together. The story reached the Court, as Lady Bessborough informs Lord Granville Leveson Gower in a letter of November 13th, 1804, published in his *Private Correspondence*. Lady Bessborough says that she has heard, through Fox, that when the Prince of Wales

visited his father at Windsor, the King's principal interest was in "the report of Mrs Siddons and Lawrence having eloped". The rumour in due course was heard by Mr Siddons, whose solicitors published the following announcement in *The Times* of December 1st:

To the Editor of *The Times*

Sir,

As professionally concerned for Mr Siddons we request that you will immediately insert the following notice in a conspicuous part of your paper.

We are,

Sir, your most obedient and humble servants,

Red Lion Square, *Nov. 30th, 1804.*

Meyrick and Broderip.

Having been informed, on my recent arrival in town, that the most wicked and injurious calumnies have been circulated of late, respecting Mrs Siddons, I do hereby offer a reward of One Thousand Pounds for the first discovery and conviction of any person who has been or shall be concerned, directly or indirectly, in the circulation thereof.

Wm. Siddons.

Upper Terrace, Hampstead,

*Nov. 30th, 1804*

In the portrait of Mrs Siddons by Lawrence painted at this time, her appearance is not that of a woman likely to inspire passion in a very young man. But she did inspire such a passion, and in May and June, 1804, when the portrait was at the Academy, she was suffering from the unwelcome attentions of an Irishman of twenty-two who was a law student at Lincoln's Inn. Her youthful admirer attached no importance to disparity of age, as he shows in the following letter, one of many addressed to the middle-aged object of his adoration, until, upon calling at her house, he was taken to Bow Street and severely reprimanded by Mr Graham, the magistrate:

The Barley Mow

Salisbury Square,

*May 2, 1804.*

Loveliest of Women,

In Belvidera, Isabella, Juliet and Calista, I have admired you until my fancy threatened to burst, and the strings of my imagination were ready to

crack to pieces; but as Mrs Siddons I love you to madness and until my heart and soul are overwhelmed with fondness and desire—say not that time has placed any difference in years between you and me! The youth of her day saw no wrinkles upon the brow of Ninon de l'Enclos. It is for vulgar forms and vulgar souls alone to grow old, but you shall flourish in eternal youth amidst the war of elements and the crash of worlds.

Public interest in the affairs of the National Gallery was revived this year by the Holwell Carr bequest of thirty-five pictures, which, however, could not be displayed to advantage, for want of space in the house in Pall Mall. This caused *The Times* to declare in a leading article that the want of a proper National Gallery was a disgrace to the country.

The Reverend William Holwell Carr, Vicar of Menheniot, Cornwall, to whom the newly acquired pictures had belonged, died in the last week of December, 1830. He was rich and well connected, keenly interested in art, and one of the best known connoisseurs and collectors of his day. Like Sir George Beaumont, he was an amateur painter of landscape, and his work had often figured in the exhibitions of the Royal Academy. He was persuaded to leave his pictures to the nation by Lord Farnborough, who said in a letter of this year addressed to George Cumberland: "There are many persons as well as the Reverend Mr Carr, who would bequeath to us valuable pictures, but though our present apartments are quite full, the Government will not build us a gallery with walls to hang them on".

Full as the apartments were, Seguier managed to find room to show some of the new acquisitions, and Constable saw them when he visited Pall Mall in August. "Carr's Rembrandts are fine", he said, "and the large Gaspar magnificent." The last of these was Gaspard Poussin's *Landscape: Dido and Eneas* (95). Of the two pictures Constable describes as by Rembrandt one is the well-known *Woman Bathing* (54). The *Landscape with Tobias and the Angel* (72) is now attributed to Adriaen Brouwer instead of to Rembrandt. Several other pictures in the Holwell Carr bequest have had their attributions changed since they were acquired by the National Gallery, including the *Christ Teaching*

(18). This was regarded in 1831 as the work of Leonardo da Vinci, but is now credited to Luini.

The crowded condition of the so-called gallery, "a parlour on the ground and two drawing-rooms on the first floor", may be judged by the following extract from an article on the nation's pictures published by the *Examiner* in September:

Since the purchase of the paintings of Mr Angerstein the collection in Pall Mall has received many valuable additions, but as no further accommodation has been provided for the exhibition of above one hundred paintings, than was afforded for the exhibition of the original two score, so the convenience of inspection, diminishing in proportion to every numerical increase, has now disappeared.

The demand for space is so great as to cause the expulsion of Correggio, Canaletti and Co. from the ante-room to the staircase, and Both even descends to a dark corner in the hall. Consequently any judicious arrangement as to the epoch of the paintings, their style or subject, is impracticable, and hence most infelicitous associations unwittingly arise from the juxtaposition of the pictures and the dissimilarity of their subjects. Christ praying in the garden by Correggio is looking up to Annibale Carracci's Silenus, and Ludovico Carracci's Susanna ogles the Honourable William Wyndham of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

So scanty is the supply of light that we might almost conclude it to be not essential to vision; numbers of the paintings are in this respect so disadvantageously hung as to be nearly invisible and it is requisite to exert some adroitness and management to catch even a glimpse of many.

The criticisms of *The Times* and the *Examiner* were supported by others, more lengthy and more pointed, written by the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, whose bitter attacks on Seguier and on the general administration of the National Gallery recalled the letters of "Alfred" published a few years earlier in *The Times*. The critic had a strong personal dislike to Seguier, which he displayed in some of the notes on the exhibition at the British Institution which I mentioned early in the present chapter. A portrait of Seguier was in the exhibition, and was described in the *Morning Chronicle* as "a vile performance, but still a facsimile of Mr Seguier's fat, unintellectual face". Lord Farnborough's entire dependence on Seguier's judgment in the choice of pictures was emphasized in the following note:

If Mr Seguier shakes his head, Lord Farnborough, though he had expressed a liking for the picture and ought still to have admired it, would instantly turn away, and drawing in his horns, say, "Yes, yes, you are right. I said it was pretty and it has a look at a distance, but close—oh! no, no—I see it won't do". On the other hand, should Mr Seguier, after an enquiring look from his Lordship, say "wery good", the exclamation would be, "Ay, ay, my opinion—I said so, you know".

In a long article on the National Gallery, published in the *Morning Chronicle* on August 29th, the critic says:

Difficult as it was to excite the powers that be to form this establishment, it would be still more difficult to conduct it worse both in point of site, which may not be the fault of the Directors, and in direction—which is. The Conservators are not conservers, the Committee of Taste have no taste, and the National Gallery is anything but National. To a judicious collection of Old Masters we have no objection—far from it,—but is it National to keep out of the Gallery that which would distinguish it as National? Why is it not made a prime object of the institution to cull freely from the best works of the English school and to encourage the leading artists of the day to record the progress of the art in this country? That would indeed make it a National Gallery.

As for the Conservators, they are like the great names that figure in parish concerns, and of no use but to cover by their own unimpeachability, the negligence and other little picture-dealing pleasantries of deputies, agents and servants. And lastly, as to the Committee of Taste, we shall mention no names, but their taste in the Fine Arts is notoriously second-hand and flows from no very pure source. Mr Seguier is an excellent judge of vamping and can from practice detect all sorts of repairs and quackery and touching upon pictures. But as to the merits of a work, the painting and other fine qualities of art, he is, as we learn from some of the first artists who have come in contact with him, as ignorant as any other full-grown, plethoric babe in Christendom. He has, however, the wisdom of taciturnity—a perfect Lord Burleigh!

Major Thwaites, the Secretary, is a very worthy gentleman and deserves a post of greater honour, for no one was ever more indefatigably attentive than he is to this post. We wish that he and Mr Seguier were rolled into one, not only for the fat he could gain by it, but for the sake of making the latter equally attentive to the Gallery. It is not the business of the Major, who is always present, but the business of Mr Seguier, who is always absent. The Major, however, moves about with a melancholy which casts a gloom over the whole show, and would better suit the Superintendent of the Catacombs.

We have been led into these remarks because it is necessary that some public notice should be taken from time to time of all our institutions, or the

Seven Sleepers in the fable would be no match for them. After the appointments are made the sprightly beginnings sink into a lethargy perfectly astonishing—except on the quarterly pay-day, when the original vivacity and vigilance return with a momentary vigour equally marvellous.

The Royal Academy lost two prominent members this year, Jackson and Northcote. John Jackson, a portrait painter of great ability, though never as fashionable as Lawrence and Beechey, died on June 1st, at the comparatively early age of fifty-three, from the effects of a chill. Apart from his original work, Jackson was supposed to be the finest copyist of his time. A good example of his skill in this way is the three-quarter-length of John Hunter, in the National Portrait Gallery, a copy of the original by Reynolds now at the Royal College of Surgeons. Sir Charles Bell, for whom this copy was made, says in a letter to his brother George, written on October 6th, 1813: "I have got a beautiful copy of Sir Joshua Reynolds' finest portrait—John Hunter, namely. It is admitted to be nearly as fine as the admired original. There is a man, Jackson, who has a wonderful talent for copying the Old Masters. He charges more for a copy than Raeburn does for painting a portrait". Jackson may have received high prices for his copies, and he certainly had a large connection as a portrait painter, but he died poor, and his widow, a daughter of James Ward, was obliged to appeal to the Royal Academy for the cost of his funeral. Raimbach says that Jackson made a considerable income, but that as he kept a carriage and lived beyond his means, he died insolvent.

Jackson was a collector of pictures in a modest way, and the portrait by Gainsborough of his two daughters, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, was once in his possession. Of Sir Joshua he had several examples—or supposed examples, for they all realized small prices at the sale of his collection by Christie on July 15th. The highest price paid was £43. 10s. for a *Woody Landscape with Figures*, the next highest £26. 5s., for a *Portrait of a Lady*. The cheapest of Jackson's Sir Joshuas was a portrait of Charles, Duke of Marlborough, which was knocked

down at eighteen shillings. For a relic of the master, the throne, or platform upon which he placed his sitter's chair, Brockedon, the artist, paid four guineas.

A palette of Sir Joshua's was sold in one lot, No. 174, together with a palette of Hogarth's and an alleged cast from the skull of Raphael, but the price paid for this group of treasures—£2. 10s.—suggests that their authenticity was doubtful. A year earlier, at Lawrence's sale, Constable had been obliged to pay twelve guineas for a palette of Reynolds alone—the one which, as I have stated, he presented to the Royal Academy. At Jackson's sale Lot No. 174 was bought by Turner, who, in emulation of Constable, offered to the Academy one of the palettes he had acquired so cheaply. The Minutes record that on January 10th, 1832: "The President produced a palette formerly belonging to Hogarth, with a request from Mr Turner, R.A., that the Royal Academy will accept it, and preserve it with that of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Ordered that a mahogany case be made for it similar to that of Reynolds". Many artists besides Turner and Brockedon were present at the auction, and Wilkie, Etty, Clint, Ward and Boxall were among those who stayed until the end, to compete for the possession of Jackson's colours, oils and varnishes. This was remarked by one of the reporters who attended the sale, and concluded his article with the following paragraph:

We are sorry that there was a necessity to bring these remains of a master to such an unreserved distribution. The sphere in which Mr Jackson moved furnished not that fictitious, fashionable glory about his name, the Court and its tail, which has advanced others for a time and caused their relics, though often less worthy, to sell for large sums. Mr Jackson, we lament to hear, died poor, and the respect due to his merits was not paid to them at the grave by the attendance of the Royal Academicians. The only reason for this neglect (if it will admit of one) is, as we learn, that Mr Jackson had delivered himself up wholly to the Methodists, with whom the funeral procession was thickly and exclusively thronged.

James Northcote, who died on July 15th at the age of eighty-five, had been the senior Royal Academician since the death

of George Dance in 1825. He was elected on the same night as Opie, who was fifteen years his junior and whom he survived twenty-four years. Harlow's admirable small three-quarter-length of Northcote in the National Portrait Gallery gives an excellent idea of him when old, at the time of his recorded conversations with Hazlitt and Ward, which bring him closer to us than any of his contemporaries. There are interesting glimpses of his life when he was young and lived with Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the forty letters written in that period to his brother in Devonshire, and quoted in my *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*.

Of these letters Northcote had probably lost sight in his later years, for the information they contain would have provided him with excellent material for his life of Sir Joshua, published in 1813. This, as it stands, is a poor book, for after his pupilage Northcote's connection with Sir Joshua appears to have been slight, and many of the personal anecdotes contained in the biography have been taken from contemporary newspapers and magazines, and have not been improved in the rewriting. There are some grounds for thinking that much of Northcote's book is the work of another hand. Prior, in his life of Goldsmith, says: "Northcote assured the writer of these lines that Laird, not himself, procured the greater part of the material for the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, his own part was small and confined chiefly to criticism on art and artists". Laird was a writer employed by Colburn the publisher to see Northcote's book through the press.

The obituaries in the newspapers tell us little that is new about Northcote, but the following paragraph from one of them is worth preserving as it shows him unexpectedly in the character of a hero:

We cannot omit a circumstance which shows that his heart, in point of sensibility, corresponded with the powers of his mind. Some years ago, when he was walking in Hyde Park, he saw a man in the Serpentine River, who had ventured too far. Mr Northcote disencumbered himself of his clothes with the utmost rapidity, rushed immediately into the river and had the

happiness of preserving the poor man, though with such labour and difficulty as had nearly brought his own life into equal peril.

Northcote's death was followed, in October, by that of William Score, the painter, according to Hazlitt, of the Dulwich version of Sir Joshua's *Tragic Muse*. Score was a Devonshire man, like Northcote, whom he succeeded as Sir Joshua's indoor pupil and assistant, working in his painting-room and acting as his agent in buying pictures at auction sales. As a young man Score frequently exhibited at the Royal Academy, but ceased to do so nearly forty years before his death. Towards the end of his career, he frequently received assistance from the charitable fund of the Academy, always through Northcote, whose last appeal on his behalf was made in June. Score's funeral expenses were paid by the Academy in October on the application of Sir William Beechey.

On November 7th the Academicians met to fill a vacancy in the list of Associates. Wyon, the runner-up at the election of 1830, was successful on this occasion. In the final ballot he defeated Clarkson Stanfield, the marine painter, by ten votes to seven. John Gibson, the sculptor, had three supporters in the preliminary voting.

## CHAPTER XII

1832

WHEN Constable served for the first time as Visitor in the Life School at the Royal Academy, he departed from the usual custom of posing the female model and placed her as Eve in a Garden of Eden cut from the evergreens in his grounds at Hampstead. The innovation was extremely popular and was admired in particular by Etty, who, although an Academician, loved to work with the students in the Life School. Twelve months afterwards, at the beginning of the year of which I am now writing, Etty served as Visitor in his turn, and prepared for the students an elaborate "living picture" which involved the engagement of several models and the disposition of a multitude of accessories. The *Morning Herald* of January 31st contained the following high-flown description of Etty's composition:

Last week the students of the Royal Academy were indebted to Mr Etty for giving them, instead of the usual "set cold" figure, the advantage of several female forms *en groupe*. The subject chosen for the display of the classical acquirements of this celebrated artist was *Venus Sacrificing to the Graces*. The novelty evinced in the choice of the subject and its arrangement was only exceeded by the fortunate selection of the models. Around the various nudities were strewn emblems and symbols derived from various antique remains, termini, etc., so aptly illustrative of the genius of classic poetry that, added to the primitive simplicity of the naked figures, it required but small effort of the imagination to suppose one's existence transferred to the time of Pericles. Two altars, loaded with fruit the most *recherché*, and exotics the most costly that Covent Garden could afford, lent a glowing splendour to the voluptuous tableau richly illumed by the various colours of the flames which blazed forth from the tripods around. The enthusiastic feelings of the young aspirants for pictorial fame were raised almost to ecstasy by the magic illusion of the glorious *coup d'œil*, and the gratified satisfaction of the worthy Professor was exhibited in dignified complacency.

Although such an ambitious grouping of models as that of Etty was never attempted by other Academicians, the Life School was well looked after by the Visitors of this period, one of whom was Turner, "without exception the best teacher I ever met", in the opinion of Sir Edwin Landseer. But most of the Visitors were painters, who, while studying the interests of students of their own art, neglected those of such as practised sculpture. For the latter there was no separate school, and if they wished to work from the life they could do so only from the models set for the painters. Complaint is made of this in an article in the *New Monthly Magazine* of November, 1832, in which the writer says of the young sculptors at the Royal Academy: "The student in this art, in both the living and the antique schools, is obliged to stand at a great distance from the object he is copying, behind all the draughtsmen, his work lighted by a candle merely, with but rare opportunities of approaching nearer the originals for the examination of their forms so indispensable to the sculptor". The same neglect prevailed for many years, and as late as 1872, Henry Weekes, R.A., then the Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, admitted the deficiencies of the teaching of modelling and ascribed it to the preponderating influence of the painter-members of the institution.

On February 10th two Academicians were elected to fill the vacancies caused by the deaths of Jackson and Northcote. Jackson was succeeded by Gilbert Stuart Newton, who defeated Deering, the architect, by twenty votes to ten. Deering lost the contest for the second seat by twenty-four votes to six, to Henry Perronet Briggs, an artist who has been described sometimes as the nephew and pupil of Opie. As a matter of fact he was neither. He was, however, a cousin of Opie's wife, whose father, Dr Alderson of Norwich, married Amelia Briggs. Henry Perronet Briggs, R.A., was the first teacher and patron of Thomas F. Dicksee, the father of Sir Frank Dicksee, P.R.A.

Gilbert Stuart Newton was the first artist of transatlantic birth to be elected an Academician since the promotion of Copley in

1779. Newton was a British subject, born in Nova Scotia in 1794, but as he came to England from Boston, where he was educated, he was often spoken of as American. His first lessons in art were received in Boston from his uncle, Gilbert Stuart, with whom, however, he had but little personal sympathy. Soon after his arrival in London he entered the Royal Academy schools, began to exhibit, and rapidly attained popularity, by means of portraits, and by subject-pictures with small figures, such as the *Yorick and the Grisette*, now in the National Gallery, Millbank. Soon after his election as an Academician he revisited Boston, where he married Miss Sally Williams Sullivan, the daughter of a well-known lawyer of that city. Newton brought his wife to England in the autumn and introduced her to his painter friends, among others to Constable, who says in a letter of this year that he was pleased to find her "so genteel and so amiable, and so free from affectation or false pride".

Newton's popularity in London society, already greater than that of any young artist with the exception of Landseer, was increased by his marriage to the charming and brilliant Miss Sullivan. Some of her letters, written home from London at this period, and published in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1875, prove her to have been possessed of exceptional intelligence. They contain admirable descriptions of London and certain of its distinguished residents in the period immediately before that of Queen Victoria, written by a woman who was fortunate enough to have access to the best society, whether fashionable, literary or artistic. She describes dinners at Lansdowne House, balls, receptions and other festivities at Stafford House and Holland House, and at the Barings, where she was introduced to the Duke of Wellington. She made the acquaintance of Sydney Smith and Tom Moore, and of Samuel Rogers, who took her for drives in the Park and entertained her and her husband at his famous breakfasts in St James's Place.

One of her most interesting letters is that in which she describes a visit to Redleaf, the seat in Kent, near Penshurst, of William Wells, a Trustee of the National Gallery, and a well-known

collector of pictures by old and modern masters, a taste in which his wealth allowed him to indulge. At Redleaf, in the month of June and in perfect weather, Newton's American wife made her first sojourn at an English country house. She was charmed with it, and says: "You can imagine nothing more beautiful than Redleaf. The house is the most tasteful place I ever saw, old-fashioned, full of beautiful pictures and furniture. The grounds are charming and it has the most famous flower garden in England". William Wells, who for his general benevolence is compared by Mrs Newton with the Man of Ross, was a perfect host although he did not care much for society in general. But he loved his artist friends who were often his guests at Redleaf, and to whom he gave many commissions. One of the Redleaf pictures, Guido's *Coronation of the Virgin* (214), is in the National Gallery, to which it was bequeathed by Wells, who died in 1847.

It is curious that Wilkie's biographers say nothing of the representation on the stage, early in this year, of two of his best known pictures, and that he himself does not mention the matter in his diary or in any of his published letters. On January 25th, Douglas Jerrold's play, *The Rent-Day*, was produced at Drury Lane, and its attractions included what are described as *tableaux vivants* made up as exactly as possible from the engravings of Wilkie's pictures, *The Rent-Day* and *Distraint for Rent*. Some of the dramatic critics thought the representation of the pictures excellent, but this was not the opinion of a writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*, to whom they appeared lifeless. He says:

*The Rent-Day* is, as we have hinted already, two of Wilkie's pictures put into motion and invested with words; it is even attempted in the course of it to turn these pictures, *The Rent-Day* and *Distraint for Rent*, into *tableaux vivants*, simply omitting, of necessity, every vestige of that which makes the originals of the consummate painter more alive than all the "reality" in the world could make them—namely the individual *expression* of each figure, and the consistent expressing and the consistent *sum* of expression to which all these amount.

Wilkie, busily engaged on his large picture for the Academy of John Knox preaching at St Andrews, contributed nothing to

the exhibition at the British Institution, where one of the centres of attraction was the view of Portsmouth from the King's Bastion, painted by Clarkson Stanfield and the first royal commission of importance given by William IV. According to a correspondent of *The Times*, who signed his letter "Alpha", the patronage of Stanfield by the King (who had given the sea-painter a second commission) had caused annoyance to the members of the Royal Academy. "Alpha", who was no friend to that institution, declares in his letter that pictures painted by two of its members and purchased by George IV, were removed from St James's Palace to Greenwich because they were not good enough for their original position. He writes on January 2nd:

The members of the Royal Academy are very angry that the King has presumed to select Stanfield to paint His Majesty a picture representing the opening of London Bridge, and modestly affirm that the King ought not to give commissions to any artists whom they have not previously sanctioned by admission into their body.

His late Majesty, by the advice of Lawrence, did honour two Royal Academicians with munificent commissions to adorn the splendid waiting rooms at St James's where the company assembled on Court days. Allow me to ask the Academy as a body what was the result? Honour to British art? Honour to the Sovereign? Honour to the President's selection?

No, Sir—but disgrace to British art, disgrace to the selection of the President, and a nuisance to the Palace, the nobility and the King. So much so indeed that, disgusted by the sneers of the Foreign Ambassadors, the King, with that delicacy which ever prevented him from doing a disagreeable thing in an unfeeling manner, cleared his rooms of the nuisance by presenting these beautiful specimens of jobbing and impotence to Greenwich Gallery, where, among many other inestimable beauties of the same gigantic geniuses, they shine, a stigma on British art, a stain on the Academy, and an everlasting evidence of the misdirected energy and justifiable disgust of George IV.

In this letter "Alpha" referred to Turner's *Battle off Cape Trafalgar*, 21st October, 1805, and De Louthembourg's *Action of the 1st June, 1794—the Queen Charlotte engaging La Montagne*, the acquisition of which, by George IV, I have mentioned in Chapter IV. They were hung on the same wall in one of the State Rooms of St James's Palace in 1824, and remained there until

both were presented to the picture gallery at Greenwich Hospital in 1829. "Alpha" was wrong in stating that both pictures were commissions from George IV. The Turner was certainly, but the De Louthembourg, painted about 1797, was acquired by purchase after the death of the artist.

Haydon, fond as he was of writing to the newspapers about the sins of the Academy, did not follow up the tempting opening afforded by "Alpha's" letter on the royal commissions. In an entry in his *Diary* this year he admits that his attacks on the Academy have not done him much good, because they gave the public the idea that he felt sore at the way he had been treated personally. He must have realized that his self-advertisement had been overdone, for he had recently been charged in a letter published in the *Morning Chronicle* with being the author "of some of the extravagant encomiums bestowed upon his own productions". Nevertheless, in Haydon's preliminary advertisement of an exhibition to be held in March, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, he was pretentious enough to announce, after mentioning the day of opening, that "The Private View for the Nobility" would be on the previous Saturday. And when the exhibition was opened one of the newspaper critics complained of the "quackery, conceit and bombast" of his catalogue.

The principal works on view at the Egyptian Hall were the large, newly-painted *Xenophon and the Ten Thousand, first viewing the Sea*, and *The Mock Election*, which George IV had purchased from Haydon and his successor had now lent to him for exhibition. With these were shown a dozen or more small and slightly executed pictures of popular subjects of a type entirely foreign to the usual productions of such an inspired painter in the grand and heroic style, as Haydon considered himself to be. Some of their titles must have caused him agonies, as for example *The First Child of a Young Couple—very like Papa about the Nose and Mama about the Eyes*; *The Sabbath Evening of a Christian*; and *The First Start in Life, or Take Care, my Darling*. It is likely that for some of the figures in these pictures (all of which were sold) the

artist was his own model. *The Gentleman's Magazine* says that all the men depicted were like him and all remarkable for the Dutchman-like proportions of their trousers, "or, as perhaps Mr Haydon would himself express it 'the capacious folding of their continuations, or the grand casting or disposition of their draperies'".

Among the visitors to the exhibition were the Duchess of Kent and the young Princess Victoria, then in her thirteenth year. Writing to Wordsworth in 1839, two years after the Princess had ascended the throne, Haydon said of her: "She has not much taste for High Art or for high poetry. She and her mother came to see my *Xenophon*, which they did not understand, but they laughed heartily at my *Reading The Times*". The correct title of the picture which amused Haydon's royal visitors was *Waiting for The Times—The Morning after the Debate on Reform*. Painted to illustrate the intense public interest in the Reform Bill, the fate of which at this time was hanging in the balance, it represents two men in the coffee-room of an inn, said to be the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly. One of them is studying the wide-open sheet of *The Times*, which almost conceals him and prevents him from noticing the angry impatience of his neighbour who awaits his turn to read the news.

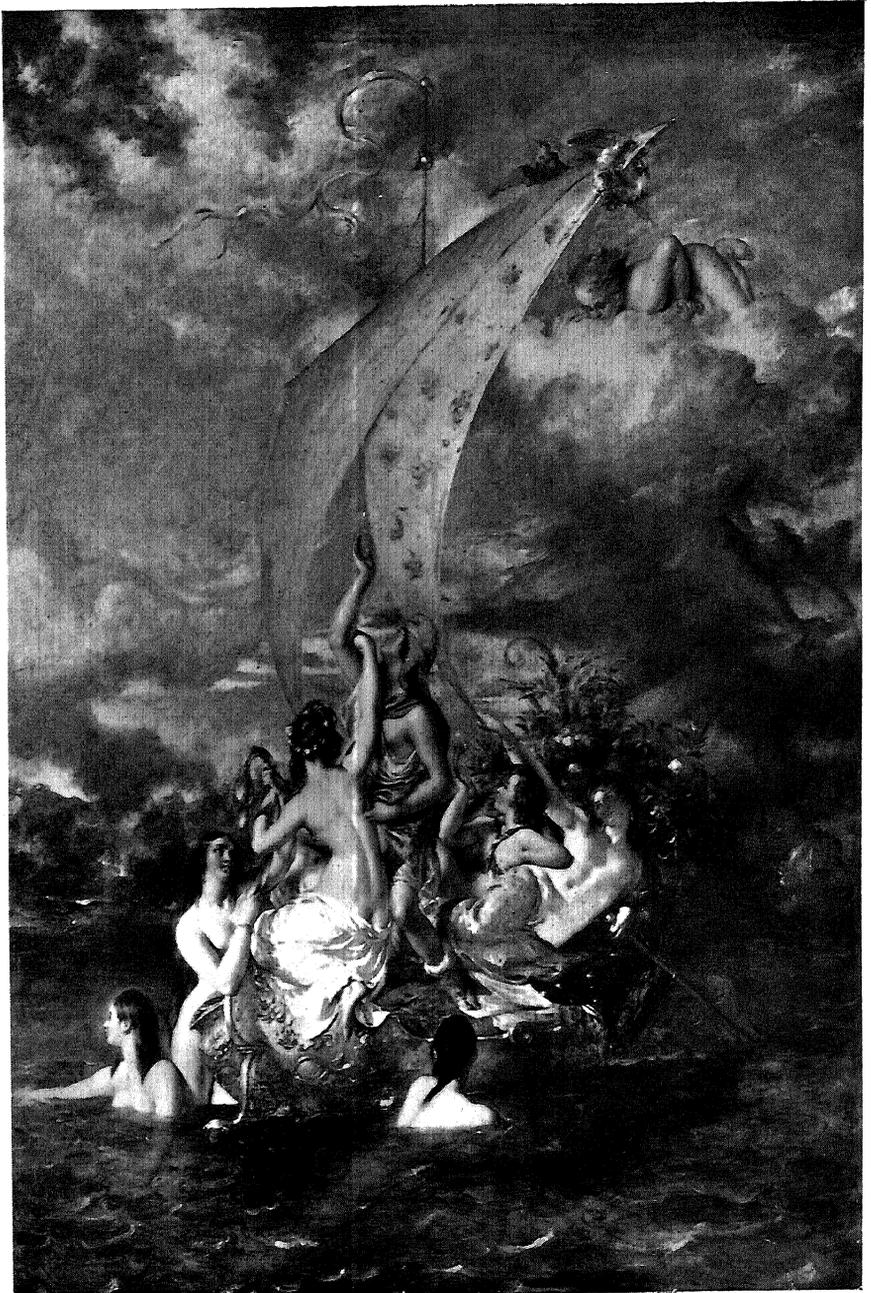
At the Academy exhibition, arranged by Landseer, Cook and William Daniell, the most attractive picture to the majority of the visitors was No. 134, *The Preaching of Knox before the Lords of the Congregation, 10th June, 1559*, by Wilkie. There was always a crowd before this picture, which *The Times* described as "the lion of the Gallery", and the *Morning Chronicle* as "a work of vast power". The *John Knox* is now in the National Gallery, Millbank, and its appearance is not impressive, for it is in bad condition, dingy in colour, and black in the shadows. But it did not look like this when it was hanging in the Great Room of the Academy in 1832, or when Solomon Hart, R.A., saw it when nearly finished in Wilkie's painting-room. Hart, who with John Burnet the engraver, called on Wilkie on a Sunday morning, when the artist was not at work, gives in his

*Reminiscences* his impressions of the picture then, and as it was when he saw it again, forty years later, after it had been acquired for the National Gallery with other works purchased from the Peel collection.

“I well remember”, he says, “the effect made upon me by the *John Knox*, then far advanced. The colouring was brilliant and rich, and the shadows, even in the extreme depths, pure and transparent. Now, alas! how changed, and how painful is the memory of that change! It can hardly be realized, save by one who saw it on the easel. The composition, the drawing, the character, of course, remain, but the tone has become black and the keeping destroyed.” The present condition of the *John Knox* is due to the use of the always dangerous asphaltum, which Wilkie believed he could employ safely, by a method he had discovered. The *John Knox* was painted for Sir Robert Peel for the agreed price of twelve hundred guineas. Peel was very fond of this picture. According to John Burnet he asked that it might be placed within his sight when he was carried up into his drawing-room to die, after the fall from his horse on Constitution Hill, in June, 1850.

Etty was again reprovèd for impropriety, this time by the *Morning Chronicle*. Its critic said of No. 196, a picture which had no title except some lines from Gray: “Another indulgence of what we once hoped a classical, but which we are now convinced is a lascivious, mind. If Mr Etty continues to revel in this meretricious vein the labour of his anatomical studies in the school will avail him nothing—no decent family can hang such sights against their walls. The naked female may, in the severity of the antique, be modest, but it is not so in the attitudes of Mr Etty”. It is amusing to think that this attack was made upon a well-known picture, now in the National Gallery, *Youth on the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm*, which seems innocent enough to modern eyes.

The portraiture at the Academy was not remarkable, and there were no outstanding subject pictures except those by Wilkie and Etty. Much space, however, was given by the press



*From the painting in the National Gallery*

YOUTH ON THE PROW AND PLEASURE AT THE HELM

By William Etty, R.A.



to the consideration of the landscapes, including those of Callcott, Constable and Turner. One writer said of Callcott: "He is not quite so great this year as usual, but only unequal to himself, for he surpasses all others in his branch". Callcott was very popular, and the *Morning Post* critic advised Turner to look to him as a model for truth and purity in landscape. This was after the critic had examined Turner's *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego coming forth from the Burning Fiery Furnace* (355), of which he said: "It ought itself to be put into the mouth of a burning fiery furnace as soon as the artist and his friends can get possession of it, as the best means of preserving its author from a like ordeal".

Turner's picture of the fiery furnace is at Millbank, as well as another landscape exhibited with it at the Academy, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage—Italy* (70), which was seen with very different eyes by the critics of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Morning Herald*. The first says that the most striking feature of the picture is the deep blue sky, which forms nearly two-thirds of the design. He admits that the deep blue tints may be right, as the sky is Italian, "...but it is difficult to conceive why the reflection of those tints should be imparted so strongly to the foreground of the picture and rest like a blue mist on the very boughs of the trees". On the other hand, the *Morning Herald*, while praising the *Childe Harold*, complains that his eyes are fatigued by "the constant recurrence of a laky-red glow throughout the picture".

The most discussed landscape in the exhibition was Constable's *Whitehall Stairs, June 18th, 1817* (279), a representation of the ceremony of the opening of Waterloo Bridge, executed chiefly with the palette knife. Leslie, Constable's biographer, who himself admired the picture immensely, says that it challenged a comparison with Canaletto, and was generally pronounced a failure. This, however, is not confirmed by the comments and criticisms in contemporary newspapers, of which, probably, Leslie saw but few as he hints more than once that Constable was neglected by the press. He was by no means

neglected, and indeed sometimes received from them more attention than he desired.

But in the case of the *Whitehall Stairs* the criticisms were in the main favourable, although the artist was reproached again for his scattered lights. *The Times* said of the picture that it was "a clever, bold painting; rough and coarse, but possessing nevertheless some fine qualities; which, having produced, the artist has done his best to spoil in his accustomed manner by sprinkling white spots over the canvas". The *Literary Gazette* thought that in spite of its eccentricities, the picture possessed qualities of art sufficient to set up a score of mediocre painters, and this was also the opinion, differently expressed, of the critic of the *Morning Post*. After describing *Whitehall Stairs* at some length, he says:

We have named this picture as one which hangs in the balance of opinion. By many it is condemned on account of its sketchy character and the flakes of white by which it is disfigured, as utterly unworthy of a place on the walls of the Academy. On the other hand, persons whose judgment demands respect, while candidly admitting its vices, uphold it as a work of consummate skill. For our own part, taking it as a whole, and deploring the defects to which we have adverted, we have no hesitation in pronouncing it one of the proudest productions of the English pencil. The qualities which recommend it are its vigorous and characteristic drawing, breadth of execution, and fine tone of colouring. To appreciate the colouring a glance at any of the surrounding pictures will suffice. Even Turner (*Helvoetsluys*, 284), and the brilliant Stanfield at the end of the room (*The Opening of New London Bridge*, 313) shrink from comparison.

It was left to the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* to attack the *Whitehall Stairs*, which he did in the following paragraphs beginning with a reference to the palette-knife execution:

What a piece of plaster it is! Mr Constable appears to think he is a Turner, and that because in a picture immediately opposite, No. 355, *Shadrach* etc., and in too many others, Turner has indulged in his vagaries and absurdities, he may do the same; but there is an excellent fable of the patient quadruped and the lap-dog which teaches that the antics of one will be something worse than ridiculous in the clumsy imitations of the other. Some people, however, according to King David, "have ears and cannot hear". The redeeming grace

and poetry and execution of Turner do much to excuse monstrosities, which are only aggravated by coarseness and vulgarity.

To simple rural scenes—a by-road, a field and a sheep—Mr Constable has occasionally imparted a freshness and natural effect (always requiring you to keep your distance) that evinces an eye for delineating certain views of nature little removed in the scale of art above a felicitous representation of still-life. But the human figure he has always handled like a bear and hugged and squeezed it into all sorts of distorted shapes. In this particular he is certainly countenanced by Turner—and may be happy to resemble him in anything. It is impossible to describe this picture, figures, painting and all; but as Turner is not so funny this year as usual, it is, among so much dulness, a relaxation of the muscles.

Soon after the close of the Academy exhibition it was announced that the Government had agreed to provide the necessary funds to build a National Gallery, in place of the house in Pall Mall in which the Angerstein and other collections had been placed temporarily. The need for a proper building designed for the exhibition of pictures had long been admitted and had been strongly urged in Parliament in the spring by Sir Robert Peel and others. In its planning the Academicians were directly interested, as they were to be allotted a portion of the rooms and galleries, in place of those occupied by them at Somerset House, which were required for the Government service.

William Wilkins, R.A., the architect, who had prepared a design for the new building, was present at the annual dinner given by the Royal Academy on July 24th to celebrate the King's birthday. After the toast to His Majesty, the President referred to the grant of the House of Commons for the erection of the new Royal Academy and National Gallery and proposed the health of Wilkins, who in replying described the negotiations that preceded the Government announcement.

He said that the subject of a new Royal Academy had occupied his attention for several years, and that when he mentioned to some of his fellow-members that the royal stables, with a sum of money to convert them, might be granted by the Government in exchange for the premises at Somerset House, he was urged to lay his plans before the authorities when there was a

favourable opportunity. The necessity of removing the National collection of pictures from Pall Mall, and the well-known character of the Prime Minister, Earl Grey, which disposed him to the cultivation of the arts of peace, had seemed in 1831 to afford the hope of the accomplishment of the object, and in July of that year he proposed to the Directors of the National Gallery a plan for altering and extending the royal stables at Charing Cross for use as a National Gallery and a new Royal Academy. It was approved by the Directors of the National Gallery and they submitted it to the Prime Minister, who appointed a committee by whose recommendations he was guided. The committee was composed of all parties, and a pleasing feature of the whole transaction was the unanimity with which its members acted.

The royal stables, or the King's Mews, as they were more generally called, occupied part of the site of what is now Trafalgar Square. They included several substantial buildings, and it was stipulated by the Treasury that such of their material as was suitable should be used in the construction of the National Gallery, the central portion of which was to be composed "of the columns and other members of the colonnade which formerly decorated the Palace at Carlton House". The value of this old material was estimated at £4000, which was additional to the £50,000 voted by Parliament for the execution of the design.

Although in their histories of the Royal Academy, Sandby and Eaton sketch the career of Wilkins at some length, they do not mention that the architect professed to be an authority on pictures and was a collector of Old Masters. When Waagen, the Director of the Royal Gallery in Berlin, was in England, the Duke of Sutherland introduced him to Wilkins, whom he describes as "a man of fine person, distinguished from most architects by a solid, learned education". He showed Waagen his collection, and the German critic speaks with respect of pictures by Titian and Rubens which it contained.

Wilkins had figured as an expert on Old Masters, in the Court of King's Bench only a few weeks before Parliament voted the

money for the building of the National Gallery. The case in which he gave evidence was *Gray v. Nieuwenhuys*, and turned on the authenticity of a picture by Wouwerman. The plaintiff, Mr Edward Gray, of Harringay House, Hornsey, an old gentleman who collected pictures, was a friend of Wilkins who introduced him to the defendant, the well-known picture dealer. Wilkins, however, charged Nieuwenhuys never to attempt to sell Gray a picture that was not an undoubted original, a condition that was not infringed. But Nieuwenhuys induced Gray to exchange a Wouwerman, *Les Sables*, for which he had given £600, for a picture, alleged to be by the same master, which Wilkins in his evidence valued at thirty shillings. The action was brought by Gray to recover his Wouwerman, which in the end Nieuwenhuys agreed to return to him. *Les Sables* is now in the Wallace collection, under the title of *A Stream in Hilly Country* (218). Another of Gray's pictures by Wouwerman, produced in Court during the trial, is in the National Gallery (975), *The Stag Hunt*.

In a report of the sale of Lord Mulgrave's pictures at Christie's this year occurs the only mention I have seen of Mr Manson, a former partner of the firm whose name is still included in its official title. Manson possessed the oratorical powers necessary to the successful auctioneer of a century ago, and the *Morning Chronicle*, in describing the Mulgrave sale, remarked: "It lost nothing by the style and manner of Mr Manson. The elder Christie could not have acquitted himself better". It did not, however, fall to the lot of Mr Manson or of Mr Christie to conduct the principal sale of 1832. This was undertaken by their dangerous rival, George Robins, an auctioneer famous for the picturesquely-worded advertisements of the goods, whatever their nature, which he was called upon to sell. The principal sale of this year was that of the pictures and property generally of George Watson Taylor, M.P., at his seat, Erlestoke Park, Wiltshire. It will be remembered that at an earlier sale of pictures belonging to him, at Christie's in 1823, Sir Joshua's *Tragic Muse* was one of the lots, and was purchased by Lord Grosvenor.

No reason was ever assigned for the sale of 1823, which was perhaps only a caprice of the wealthy owner of the pictures, many of which were bought-in and appeared again at the Erlestoke Park sale.

This, however, was forced upon Watson Taylor, who, after long enjoying a princely income, had failed with liabilities of £450,000 owing to the depreciation of his property in the West Indies. The pictures and furniture of his town-house in Grafton Street came under the hammer in June, and on July 9th Robins commenced a twenty-days' sale at Erlestoke Park, which is about six miles from Devizes. For the preceding fortnight everything had been on view to the buyers of the ten-shilling catalogues of the four thousand lots. These catalogues were compiled by W. H. Pyne, the artist, and were said to be the bulkiest publications of their kind ever issued. During the days when the house was open to the public special coaches were run by the hotel-keepers from Devizes and Salisbury to Erlestoke and the sale caused as much sensation in Wiltshire as that at Fonthill nine years earlier. Beckford, who came from Bath to see the house and its contents, declared that they exceeded Fonthill in magnificence, and expressed a wish to buy a Paul Potter—one of the finest pictures in the Erlestoke collection. The Erlestoke sale was different in one important respect from that at Fonthill. The latter was largely a made-up affair and included quantities of furniture and pictures which had never formed part of the equipment of the house. At Erlestoke, Robins gave his word that everything offered belonged to Mr Watson Taylor and that no reserve price was placed on any of the lots in the sale.

Sir Robert Peel, who was very much interested in Watson Taylor's pictures, came down with Lady Peel from London to Devizes and stayed a night at the Black Bear (the inn once kept by Sir Thomas Lawrence's father) in order that they might go over the house early on the following morning, before the admission of the public. A similar privilege was granted to Wilkie, who also came from London to see the pictures.

The prices realized for the finer pieces of furniture, all of which are described in a contemporary account, as "of the most gorgeous kind, with silver fire-irons, and chairs and sofas of burnished and matted gold", were regarded as disappointing. Two thousand guineas were expected for a pair of console tables, inlaid with precious stones and mounted in ormolu, but they were knocked down for five hundred and eighty guineas to Hume, the dealer, who had sold them to Watson Taylor, and who purchased extensively at his sale. Other purchasers of furniture or porcelain included the Duke of Buccleuch, who bought a circular table for three hundred and sixty guineas, Lord Normanton and Lord Craven.

Of the pictures in the Hogarth Room, all authentic, the highest price, ninety guineas, was paid for *The Children of R. R. Graham, Esq.* This was bought by Lord Normanton. *The Shrimp Girl*, "sketched in oil by Hogarth from a well-known itinerant, celebrated for her beauty and sprightliness", realized forty guineas; a portrait of Miss Fenton as Polly Peachum, fifty-two guineas; a version of the *Scene from the Beggar's Opera*, seventy guineas; *The Laughing Audience*, twenty guineas, and a portrait of Hogarth himself, thirty guineas. Another lot, sold for twenty-one guineas, intimately connected with the painter, though not his work, was No. 171, described in the catalogue as: "Hogarth's favourite Dog, Trump, Modelled in Terra Cotta by one who had often caressed him, his Master's friend, the celebrated Roubiliac. This interesting model was purchased by that distinguished Virtuoso, Mr Bindley, at Hogarth's sale". A view of Dover by Samuel Scott, "the small figures introduced by Hogarth", went for only eight guineas; and a portrait of Lady Taylor by Sir Joshua for fourteen guineas. There were no bids for two other Sir Joshuas, portraits of Lady Taylor and Sir John Taylor, or for a naval officer's portrait by Gilbert Stuart. A second Stuart, *Portrait of Dugald Malcolm*, was sold for three pounds.

One room at Erlestoke was devoted to Bonaparte and filled with portraits of him and his relations, and pictures of incidents

in his career, all of which had belonged to the Imperial family and were acquired by Watson Taylor after Waterloo. Among the pictures by Old Masters, two landscapes by Hobbema were sold for £557. 10s. and £546 respectively; and the Paul Potter, admired by Beckford, for £787. 10s. A picture by Greuze, *A Child fondling a Dog*, went for £703. 10s., and a whole-length portrait by Murillo of Don Faustino Neve for £504. The Hobbemas and the Potter were bought by the dealer Nieuwenhuys, but not for Sir Robert Peel, as was believed at the time. Peel wanted other things in the collection, and obtained them on most favourable terms.

Several exceedingly interesting portraits by Reynolds were sold for small prices, those of Dr Johnson, £157. 10s.; Baretta, £88. 4s.; Arthur Murphy, £23. 2s.; and Warren Hastings, £57. 15s. Of these, Peel obtained the Dr Johnson, in addition to the three lots he mentions in a postscript to a letter written to John Wilson Croker a few days after the sale. "I forgot to mention", he says, "that I did not buy the Hobbemas, nor did I attempt to buy them, but I did buy what I could not find on the osier pool or by the brookside: first, the original portrait of Johnson by Sir Joshua; second, the bust of Pope by Roubiliac; third, the bust of Dryden by Scheemaker; and fourth, a beautiful portrait by Dobson. The first two are really valuable, but people were buying gilt chairs and old china and let me quietly buy my portraits and busts for £300."

Croker, who was the friend of many painters, and as much interested in pictures and the fine arts generally as Peel himself, answered his letter thus on August 15th:

I give you joy! Pope—Dryden—Johnson, for £300! I am as poor as you may live to be, but I should have given £300 for Pope alone. It is to my taste the finest piece of marble I ever saw, and if I were to have one costly work of art it should have been that if I could have compassed it. When I heard Lord Hertford was going to Erlestoke I was just about to advise him to bid for that, which I estimated at £500; but he has such a disposition to make a present of anything one happens to admire that I was afraid he might offer it to me, and so I luckily held my peace. I forget the Dryden. The Johnson, if it be the picture—as I believe it is—which I saw twenty six years ago at

Mrs Piozzi's, is invaluable. So again I give you joy, if in the storm-portending time in which we live the gewgaws of art or literature are worth a thought.

The portrait of Dr Johnson by Reynolds was, as Croker thought, the one he had seen in 1806, at Mrs Piozzi's house, where it remained until 1816, when it was sent to the auction room with two other portraits by Reynolds of Baretti and Murphy. Watson Taylor bought the Johnson at Mrs Piozzi's sale and afterwards acquired the others. All three were included in his own sale of 1823 but were bought in for him by Major Thwaites. The variations in the prices realized by the Reynolds portraits at the three sales are worth recording:

## PIOZZI SALE, 1816

Johnson	...	...	£378
Baretti	...	...	£31. 10s.
Murphy	...	...	£108. 18s.

## WATSON TAYLOR SALE, 1823

Johnson	...	...	£493. 10s.
Baretti	...	...	£105
Murphy	...	...	£94. 10s.

## WATSON TAYLOR SALE, 1832

Johnson	...	...	£157. 10s.
Baretti	...	...	£88. 4s.
Murphy	...	...	£23. 2s.

Sir Robert Peel paid £73. 10s. for Roubiliac's bust of Pope, which, like the three Reynolds portraits, had been bought in at the sale of 1823. The bust realized £535. 10s. when it was sold with the Peel heirlooms in 1900. The portrait of Dr Johnson was purchased by the Government, with other pictures from the Peel collection, in 1871, and is now in the National Gallery; where also hang Hogarth's *Shrimp Girl* and his portrait of Miss Fenton as Polly Peachum. The Hogarths were acquired for the Gallery in 1884, the first for £262. 10s., the second for £840, at the sale of the Miles (Leigh Court) collection. Probably the

founder of that collection, Mr J. P. Miles, obtained them at the sale of 1832, as he was buying pictures at that time and Leigh Court and Erlestoke are only about twenty-five miles apart from one another.

It is curious that neither Redford nor Graves makes any reference to the dispersal of the Erlestoke collection. Not one of the works I have mentioned as having been sold when it was broken up in 1832, is included in their lengthy records of pictures sold by auction.

Watson Taylor, who was one of the principal collectors of his day, was interested almost entirely in the pictures of earlier periods, but he gave several commissions to one rising artist. This was Clarkson Stanfield, whose *Wreckers, off Fort Rouge, Calais*, realized no less than £435. 10s. at the sale in June of the contents of Watson Taylor's town-house in Grafton Street. It was an extraordinary price at the time for the work of a young artist. Constable at no part of his career received so large a sum for a landscape.

Stanfield was elected an A.R.A. in the autumn, when he defeated H. P. Bone by twenty votes to six. A second vacant Associateship was filled by the election of Andrew Geddes, who had seventeen votes against nine for John Linnell. This was the first election at which Linnell received any serious support.

By the death of Sir Walter Scott on September 21st the Academy lost one of the most distinguished of its honorary members. Scott, who died at Abbotsford after a long and distressing illness, had been Antiquary to the Royal Academy since 1827, when he succeeded Sir Henry Englefield. Although in his novels he says so little about art, he was always interested in painters and painting, and when young handled the brush himself, though without any success. "I took lessons in oil-painting in youth", he says, "from a little smouch called Burrell, a clever, sensible creature, though; but I could make no progress either in painting or drawing. Nature denied me correctness of eye and neatness of hand, yet I was very desirous to be a draughtsman at least and laboured harder to attain that point than at

any other in my recollection, to which I did not make some approaches.”

Scott had suffered from the pictures, forced upon him, of another amateur painter, which he disposed of when he gave up his Edinburgh house after the financial collapse of 1826. On March 1st of that year he mentions in his journal that he has been selecting furniture and other things that will have to be spared from the impending auction and removed from Edinburgh to Abbotsford:

The best part of it is the necessity of leaving behind, viz., getting rid of, a set of most wretched daubs of landscapes in great gilded frames of which I have often been heartily ashamed. The history of them was curious. An amateur artist (a lady) happened to fall into misfortunes, upon which her landscapes, the character of which had been buoyed up far beyond their proper level, sank even below it—and it was low enough. One most amiable and accomplished old lady continued to encourage her pencil, and to order picture after picture which she sent as presents to her friends. I suppose I have eight or ten of them, which I could not avoid accepting. There will be plenty of laughing when they come to be sold. It would be a good joke enough to cause it to be circulated that they were performances of my own in early youth, and they would be looked on and bought up as curiosities.

But Scott admits that there were worse pictures than those which the kindness of the charitable old lady had bestowed upon him. “My own oil paintings”, he says, “were to those of Miss...above commemorated, what hers are to Claude Lorraine’s.” But he had one qualified success. When taking what he calls some “vile views from nature” in Liddesdale, he made a sketch of Hermitage Castle, from which his friend William Clerk made a better copy. It was further improved by the retouching of a professional artist, Hugh Williams, and was the basis of one of the illustrations to the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Scott was proud to think that the engraving, “founded on the labours of three draughtsmen, one of whom could not draw a straight line, and the two others had never seen the place meant to be represented, was nevertheless pronounced by the natives of Liddesdale to give a very fair notion of the ruins of Hermitage”.

A picture that made a particular appeal to Scott as a Border minstrel, on account of its subject and the locality depicted, was the *Chevy Chase* of Edward Bird, R.A., of Bristol, painted when that artist was at the height of his short-lived reputation, and purchased by the Marquis of Stafford. Bird presented his original sketch of the picture to Scott, who acknowledged the gift in the following letter:

To Mr Bird, Artist, Bristol.

Dear Sir

I cannot refrain from troubling you once more to express my extreme satisfaction with the battle-field of Chevy Chase, of which, being a Borderer, I may perhaps be allowed to be in some respects a judge. Upon comparing the sketch with which you honoured me, with the engraving which I received the other day by Lady Stafford's kindness, my admiration of both is if possible increased, and convinces me that my curiosity to see how the painting itself should correspond with the highly spirited sketch ought to have been accompanied with no shadow of doubt as to your power of bringing out and finishing the details of an undertaking so happily imagined in the first conception.

I have heard with pleasure that your distinguished talents are at present engaged in embodying for posterity a representation of the departure of the King of France for his own dominions, and his arrival at Calais. The modern dress is not favourable for the artist but your genius can surmount greater obstacles, and everyone must rejoice in the prospect that events so highly favourable to this country are likely to be given to the eyes of those who had not the advantage of seeing the reality.

Once more Sir, accept my thanks for the valuable present you have made. Lady Stafford's print graces my cottage upon Tweedside, and your sketch is to hang over my library chimney piece, surrounded by broadswords, battle-axes, and targets, which may have been at Chevy Chase themselves for anything I know.

I am, Sir, etc.

Walter Scott.

Edinburgh, 20 May, 1814

Scott had many other acquaintances among professional painters including, of course, all those in Edinburgh of any standing, but he never seems to have realized Raeburn's superiority to the rest. Of the London men those he knew best were Phillips, Wilkie and Haydon. He had some intimacy also with

Lawrence, whom he found very pleasant, but, "from habit of coaxing his subjects, I suppose, a little too fair-spoken". Scott himself had been Lawrence's "subject", when he sat for what Lockhart calls "the unrivalled portrait", painted for George IV and now at Windsor. The most good-natured of men, he gave sittings to many other artists, often at considerable inconvenience, as when Leslie, Stuart Newton and Landseer paid the visit to Abbotsford which I have described on p. 77. They were all the guests of Scott, who allowed none of them to see that he was disturbed, but complained afterwards of "the distressing state of constraint" caused by their visit. "I am as tired of the operation", he said, "as old Maida (his dog) who had been so often sketched that he got up and walked off with signs of loathing, whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper and handle his brushes." Scott says this in his diary when describing the visit, soon afterwards, of another young artist, J. P. Knight, who had been commissioned to paint him by Terry, the actor.

Knight, who afterwards became a Royal Academician, had no regular sittings but was allowed to sit in the room in which Scott worked and to catch what resemblance he could from occasional observation. The portrait remained in Terry's possession until his death when it was sold by auction with his other property. It was afterwards acquired by a collector named Harding as the work of Raeburn, and Knight speaks of this confusion of authorship, and describes the later history of the portrait, in a letter to Sir William Stirling Maxwell. He says:

Some years after Terry's death I was invited to dine with Mr Harding of Finchley, and on taking my place at the table I saw, and claimed, my portrait of Sir Walter Scott, hanging on the opposite wall. Mr Harding said his plot had succeeded, for having casually heard that I was the author of the work he thought the best way to test the truth would be to place me face to face with the picture. He promised that henceforth it should bear my name. Mr Harding afterwards informed me that his kitchen chimney, which passed close behind the wall on which the portrait was hung, had caught fire the day previous and that it was much injured. On examination I found that it was utterly and hopelessly destroyed. This was the only damage done by the

fire and by a curious coincidence Sir Walter Scott died on the day that it occurred.

Turner was also a guest at Abbotsford, but not until a year before Scott's death. Cadell, the publisher, had agreed with Turner to provide a frontispiece and vignette for each of the twelve volumes of the poems of Scott, who says in his diary of April 14th, 1831: "I have written to this man of art, inviting him to my house (though if I remember he is not very agreeable) and offered to transport him to all the places where he is to exercise his pencil. We can put him at home in all the subjects". Turner came to Abbotsford in the following September, and Scott in person introduced him to some of the scenery which provided him with the material for his illustrations. Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, describes some of their excursions but does not say how Turner got on with his host, who at this time was in bad health and visibly breaking up.

Scott admired Turner's topographical landscapes, and owned several, all of which were contained in one frame, made from the wood of an oak felled while Turner was at Abbotsford. The Turners in their oak frame were still hanging in what had been "the den" of the master of the house, two years after his death, when Abbotsford was advertised to be let furnished. "The Library", it was stated, "contains many thousands of volumes, of which a tenant under certain conditions, may have the use."

It is curious that on the same page of the *Morning Post* of August 4th, 1834, on which this announcement appeared, the well-known house of Mrs Siddons in Upper Baker Street—the house in which the great actress died—was offered to a suitable tenant. The advertisement of the Baker Street house was side by side with that of Abbotsford, and also included the furniture, "most of which was Mrs Siddon's, as well as the glass, crockery, and cooking utensils".

## CHAPTER XIII

1833

WHEN Sir Thomas Lawrence died he bequeathed to the Royal Academy a superb dessert service of Sèvres porcelain, which had been one of his proudest possessions. It was given to him by Charles X, after his visit to Paris in 1825 to paint the portraits of the French King and the Dauphin for George IV. "This splendid token of Royal courtesy", said Lawrence in his will, "I bequeath to the President and Council, for the time being, to be by them used on the birthday of the King, and at the annual dinner on the opening of the exhibition, and on other public occasions, in remembrance of the honour conferred by a foreign Prince on the President of the Royal Academy of Great Britain."

This Sèvres dessert service is not mentioned by either of the historians of the Royal Academy, Sandby and Eaton, and no biographer of Lawrence gives any information about it except that which is contained in the will. According to the writer of an article on Lawrence, published in 1831 in the *Library of the Fine Arts*, it was received by the Academicians soon after Lawrence's death in January, 1830, and used at the annual banquet in the following May. This, however, is inaccurate. The Academicians were never in possession of the dessert service, which remained in the hands of the executor, Archibald Keightley, presumably because Lawrence was insolvent at the time of his death. Three years afterwards Keightley offered the service to the Academicians on terms that are not disclosed in the Minutes, in which there is the following record on February 18th, 1833: "Read a letter from Mr Keightley, executor to the late Sir T. Lawrence, inviting the President and Council to purchase a dessert service of Sèvres porcelain bequeathed by

Sir T. Lawrence to the Academy. Ordered to be laid before the General Assembly”.

The General Assembly of Academicians referred the matter back to the Council, “to decline Mr Keightley’s proposition in such terms as they think proper”, and this was done on March 11th. Nothing is known of the style or extent of the French King’s gift which no doubt was disposed of by the executor for the benefit of Lawrence’s creditors.

Just before the Academy exhibition was opened in the first week of May, there were rumours that a Royal Duke had been prevented from attending the annual banquet by a question of precedence. According to the story told in the newspapers, the Russian Ambassador, Prince Lieven, declined to accept an invitation to the dinner unless he was allowed to rank before the King’s brother, the Duke of Sussex, who therefore stayed away. It was said that when the matter was brought to the notice of the Prime Minister, Earl Grey, he laughed at the question of precedence and said that he did not mind in the least where the Academicians placed *him*. The incident is probably identical with that mentioned by the biographer of Sir Martin Archer Shee, and wrongly assigned to the year 1834. In that version of the story, however, it was not the Duke of Sussex but the Lord Chancellor of whom the Russian Ambassador claimed precedence.

It was the custom at this time, and for many years afterwards, for the Royal Academy to carpet the floors of its galleries with green baize for the banquet and the Private View. This improved the general aspect of the galleries and the appearance of the pictures, as the critic of the *Morning Post* remarked after attending the Private View. “The eye”, he said, “derives an unconscious comfort and relief from the cool dark mass beneath it, which in the matter of picture-seeing is above all price.” In his first review of the exhibition he appealed to the Academicians to retain the baize throughout the season and was disappointed on visiting Somerset House again to find that it had been taken up. No doubt the pictures looked less well without it, for the

flooring of the Academy in 1833 was not like that of the Burlington House galleries to-day. It was nothing but bare boards, watered every morning to keep the dust down. The watering-pot was used in similar fashion in the earlier years of the National Gallery, where as late as 1850 the method employed was almost as primitive. The Keeper said then, when describing the cleansing of the rooms: "They are swept every morning. They are first strewn with wet sawdust and then swept carefully, so as to raise as little dust as possible".

The most prominent objects in the exhibition, which had been arranged by Briggs, Westall and R. R. Reinagle, were two full-length portraits. One of them was of the King, wearing the uniform of the Grenadier Guards, and, in the opinion of one of the newspaper critics, "as stiff and starched as any drill-sergeant, glittering with varnish and executed in a manner the least calculated to enhance the reputation of Wilkie as a portrait-painter". The other prominent full-length was also by Wilkie, and represented the Duke of Sussex attired as a Highland chieftain. The frames of both were of an overpowering magnificence, against which the Academy Council had protested without effect. Wilkie exhibited only one subject-picture of no great size, No. 134 *Spanish Monks, a scene witnessed in a Capuchin Convent at Toledo*, which was hung beneath his portrait of the King, the best place in the exhibition. He was now the King's painter and much sought after as a fashionable artist. During the winter he had been occupied with portraits, and with the preparation of designs for *tableaux vivants*, representing scenes from Scott's novels and shown at a great entertainment given at Hatfield by the Marchioness of Salisbury.

Wilkie, who assisted Lady Salisbury at the particular request of the Duke of Wellington, devoted much time to the preparation of his designs and was at Hatfield when they were carried out in the presence of a large and aristocratic gathering. *The Times* sent a representative to Hatfield to describe the *tableaux*, which he praised. But he complained bitterly of Hatfield's inhospitable treatment of its guests. "The dresses", he said, "of

the personages who figured in the *tableaux* were magnificent, but no sense but the *sight* was gratified. The niggardly supply of refreshments—there being nothing to eat or drink after the small allowance of tea and hot water was exhausted—made everybody discontented.”

The critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, who after looking at Wilkie's work in the exhibition thought that his day was past, managed to bring in a sneer at his enemy, Constable, in a paragraph on the supposed general decline of the Royal Academy. “Its whole character”, he declared, “in ‘the salt of art’, rests on the shoulders of Callcott, Turner, Leslie, Newton, Eastlake and Landseer. Take then the mass of talent iniquitously kept out of its bounds, and compare it with the residue within, the Daniells, Constables, Joneses, Westalls, etc.” He ridiculed Constable's *Englefield House, Berkshire* (34) and said the picture was mere topography or map-work and could be of no value to anyone but the owner of the house itself. “When right in parts this artist never sustains himself steadily, but is

As self-sufficient and unstable  
As any tipling constable.”

The *Englefield House, Berkshire* is the landscape of which Constable says, in a letter of May 14th, 1833, “the *Morning Post* speaks beautifully of my ‘House’”. The following is the notice to which he refers. It was published in the *Morning Post* on May 4th:

No. 34, *Englefield House, Berkshire, the Seat of Benyon de Beauvoir Esq.*, *Morning*, J. Constable, R.A. We have seen nothing to compare with this from the hand of Mr Constable for a long time. There is so much freshness and truth and such a mass of bright but sober colour, that it is quite a gem in this way. Mr Constable has evidently forgotten to put on his last layer of whitewash, with which he generally complements his finished pictures. We hope he has lost the brush. The whole picture consists of an ancient castellated mansion on a lawn, with a thick shrubbery behind. For the exactness of the local colouring there is nothing to match this in the exhibition.

Among the visitors to the Royal Academy was Thomas G. Appleton, the American publisher, then a young man, and

anxious, as an amateur painter, to make an acquaintance with the work of Turner. He says that he was disappointed, because all Turner's pictures at the Academy were sea-pieces with chalky grey for sky and water, and with the force in most cases concentrated in an ochre sail. "Ochre is his favourite tint and he is often called 'The Ochre Man.'" This may have been the case, but I have seen no reference to such a nickname in any book on Turner or in the comments on him in contemporary newspapers. Appleton's memory played him false about the nature of Turner's exhibits, which were not all sea-pieces. Two were Venetian subjects, and of one of them, *Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom House, Venice: Canaletti Painting* (109) a curious story was in circulation. It was to the effect that Turner painted his picture in two or three days, because he had heard that Stanfield was engaged on a similar subject. He did not paint it in rivalry, for he did not admit anything of that kind, but only, it was supposed, to show the younger artist how such a theme should be treated and to give him a lesson in atmosphere and poetry.

According to the following note in the *Athenaeum*, Turner did not complete the most important work he had intended for the Academy this year because there were no buyers for his poetic subjects:

One poetic composition will make a name to a painter, but twenty will not find him subsistence; he has to seek his daily bread from more homely sources. Turner, the noblest landscape painter of any age, cannot sell one of his poetic pictures; he rolls them up and lays them aside after they have been the wonder of the exhibition. We need feel no surprise, therefore, to hear that he desisted from finishing what he considered a crowning glory to all his fancy works, and intended for Somerset House.

At the British Institution, the summer exhibition, which was concurrent with that of the Academy, was composed of representative paintings by the three deceased Presidents, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Benjamin West, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. Hung with the portraits by Sir Joshua those by Lawrence suffered, and his popularity fell at once many degrees. Haydon, after

seeing the exhibition, wrote in his diary: "By Sir Joshua's side Lawrence looks like a miniature painter in large, and West like a skilful sign-painter". But Haydon, in a long letter published in *The Times*, said that Lawrence was not fairly hung at the British Institution and that the depreciation of his work had been overdone. Haydon thought that the fact that Lawrence began as a painter in crayons always handicapped him, and that "the husky, dry, horrid chalkiness of that detestable medium stuck to him till death". The comparison with Reynolds had certainly turned the public against him. Haydon says:

The comparison would have been fairer had Lawrence and Reynolds been placed in the same room and in the same light. The only good light at the British Institution is the North Room; the middle one is too strong a light and the other too dark; and I can hardly suppose a more effectual way of injuring Lawrence's real merit than by hanging his raw pictures in a violent light, close to the eye, as the late King, the Queen of Portugal, Princess Charlotte and Lord Durham happen to be placed. It is now three long years and a half since Lawrence died—his death, as Johnson said of Garrick, eclipsed the gaiety of nations. Now he is dead most of his former adorers are undervaluing the excellence he really possessed, and seem astounded that he cannot stand competition with Reynolds.

Mrs Newton, in her correspondence from which I have already quoted, refers to the disappointing appearance of Lawrence's work at the exhibition. Writing to her friends in America this year, on June 23rd, she describes one of the famous and exclusive evening parties given at their Gallery by the Governors of the British Institution on Monday evenings throughout the summer:

I had a note from Mr Rogers asking if we should like tickets for the British Institution on Monday evening, but I had one which Mr Wells sent me, and Mr Newton has, of course, free admittance. No one can be admitted except by a Governor's ticket or as a Royal Academician. We went on Monday evening. There is an exhibition of the works of the last three Presidents, Mr West, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The Gallery is lighted every Monday evening and people go in evening dress.

The pictures of Sir Joshua are exceedingly beautiful, and Mr West shines out very brightly, but Sir Thomas Lawrence is very much abused. He was

greatly admired during his life, but people seem to be repaying themselves for admiring him too much by undervaluing him now.

Here I saw the famous Lady Blessington, and was much disappointed in her appearance. She was stout, red, and inelegant-looking; dressed in blue uncut velvet, and a white hat and feathers. She was leaning on Count D'Orsay's arm. He was much decked with rings and chains, and though handsome, didn't look like a gentleman.

At the end of June, just before the close of the Academy, a newspaper report of a sale at Christie's brought Constable's name before the public in a way that caused him intense annoyance. There is a mention of the sale in a letter of Constable's quoted in his *Life* by Lord Plymouth, who, however, was unacquainted with the history of the incident. Constable had a friend, Robert Ludgate, of Sussex Place, Regent's Park, who was a collector of pictures. Early in the year he acquired one by Constable, a study, about three feet by four, of a dell, perhaps of the dell in Helmingham Park which was the subject of a picture exhibited by the artist at the Academy in 1830. The study had been painted in 1826, and sold then by Constable, who afterwards repurchased it and worked upon it again before it passed into Ludgate's collection. By his desire it was sent in February to the spring exhibition at the British Institution, and was noticed and praised by several of the critics.

Ludgate died before the close of the exhibition, and his widow at once sent all his pictures to Christie's, with the exception of the study of the dell, which was returned to Constable's house when the British Institution closed its doors. Mrs Ludgate sent for it and by the advice of a friend, Major Chapman, and without telling Constable of her action, forwarded it to Christie's some time after the rest of the pictures. The *Dell Scene* arrived too late to be included in the printed catalogue, and when it came up at the end of Ludgate's sale on June 29th, the dealers doubted its authenticity, and made no bids. In Messrs Christie's own private catalogue it is entered in pen and ink as "No. 45, Constable, Landscape".

This accident, for it was no more, might not have troubled Constable much had it not been made known to the world at

large by his persecutor on the *Morning Chronicle*, who published in his journal a brief but damaging comment on the Ludgate sale. After noticing Christie's failure to dispose of Lawrence's huge *Satan* (offered on the same day by the artist's executor) the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* said:

Another lot we may notice, as its public estimation may serve to teach a little modesty to the Royal Academicians in their demands. A good-sized *Dell Scene* by Mr Constable, R.A., in his usual style, and we should say preferable to anything he has in the present exhibition at the Academy, was knocked down at fifty shillings.

This statement was grossly unfair. The *Dell Scene* was not sold for fifty shillings or for any other price, and it passed without a bid, only because it was not recognized as the work of Constable. He was furious at this fresh insult from a man whose previous attacks still rankled in his mind, but the friends whom he consulted urged him to ignore the paragraph and to preserve silence upon the subject even in conversation. In the letter I have mentioned as quoted in Lord Plymouth's book—a letter addressed to Mr Boner, the tutor of his sons—Constable says:

“Do nothing,” they say, “do not let him see that his infamous paragraph has received any notice of yours.” I have seen Sheepshanks, and he says the same, that I am only higher in his estimation. . . . He would have given 35 guineas for the picture had he known of it. Old Allnutt is quite angry at losing it and says Chapman should not have put it up. Mrs Ludgate, to whom these pictures belonged, has written a very kind letter to me to say that all she did was by Chapman's advice; and he forsook her house some days before the sale. It is supposed that he or his friends are possessed of many of the pictures; she left no reserve upon them, unfortunately. Her note to me during the delivery of the pictures was dictated by Chapman, whom she calls *base*. Sir Martin Shee and Mulready both say I was right not to notice it at all in any way. Let such wretches feel that I consider name and character beyond the reach of such attacks. But I have little doubt that such villainy will be unmasked in time. What can such a man be but an assassin—to destroy character, livelihood and everything else, and to let himself out to hire to write against everything good, for pay? It is quite impossible that I could compound with an assassin.

Early in the autumn the excavations were commenced for the building of the National Gallery on the northern border of

the open space, now known as Trafalgar Square. This space had recently been formed at a cost of more than £800,000 by the removal of the King's Mews and more than five hundred houses and buildings at Charing Cross and the southern end of St Martin's Lane. The present frontage of the National Gallery is as Wilkins designed it, but it would have been placed fifty feet more to the south, had he been allowed to carry out his original plan. This would have given him more space and light but would have cut off the view of the portico of St Martin's Church from Pall Mall East. Certain parishioners of St Martin's protested against the proposed obstruction, and, headed by the vicar and the Duke of Northumberland, brought such pressure to bear upon the authorities that Wilkins was obliged to set back his frontage to its present line. About this question there was a great deal of newspaper controversy, and in one of the letters Wilkins wrote, he mentioned that his proposal to the Government to build a National Gallery at Charing Cross was accepted only just in time to prevent the erection of a row of shops along the selected frontage.

On September 14th, the *Athenaeum*, a journal that was the mouthpiece of Wilkins and had supported him in most of the disputes about the position of the Gallery, published the following paragraph:

The long-agitated question about the National Gallery is at length decided. On Monday last Mr Wilkins staked out the building, and on Wednesday he had the honour of submitting his plans and models to the King, at St James's Palace. The King expressed his unqualified approval of the designs. Some alterations in the elevation having been suggested by persons whose taste entitles their opinions to consideration, the models were exhibited under both aspects for his Majesty's decision. The King gave a most decided preference to the design as it was originally intended, which will consequently be adopted. Operations began on the following morning and the foundations for the east wing will shortly be commenced. The mode intended to be pursued is to finish the east wing for the reception of the national collection. The centre will be commenced in the spring; but the west wing not till the autumn of next year, in order to obtain time for the removal of the Records, which now occupy a portion of the old stables.

According to this statement it was originally intended that the National Gallery should occupy the east wing of the building and the Royal Academy the west, but it is evident that the words east and west were accidentally transposed by the writer. The east wing, the first finished, was for the Royal Academy, which was installed in it a year before the National Gallery was given possession of the west wing. It is said in *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts* of December that when the excavators had sunk to a depth of ten feet in search of earth for the foundation of the east wing, "they reached the bed of an ancient rivulet, the stagnant weeds of which were ten feet deeper".

The site of the National Gallery, though in some respects ideal, was objected to by a correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* who wrote on May 23rd, above the signature "B. B.", to protest against keeping the nation's pictures anywhere so near the centre of London as Charing Cross. He said that it was only necessary to visit the Council Room of the Royal Academy to see the effect of the London atmosphere on pictures. At this time the Council Room, in which the diploma works of the Academicians were hung, was accessible to visitors to the annual exhibitions, and "B. B." declared that those who entered the room always left it quickly, for "veiled as the pictures are with a thick coat of soot or dirt, their merit is invisible. . . . Those which have been hung up for twenty or thirty years are so embedded in dirt as to be only looked at with disappointment and loathing".

No doubt the diploma pictures were dirty but this was due less to atmospheric impurities than to neglect. Some of them had been in the possession of the Academy for more than sixty years and there are no entries in the Minutes during that period to show that anything was paid to picture-cleaners to put them in order. Money was frequently voted for the cleaning or restoration of works of art which had been acquired by the Academy by gift or purchase, and in April of this year ten guineas were paid to Mr Brown of Russell Place for cleaning Sir Joshua's

portrait of Sir William Chambers. But the diploma pictures, many of which had hung for years in rooms lighted by smoky oil lamps, became dingier and dingier, until their subjects could hardly be distinguished. Most of them do not appear to have been cleaned properly until 1857, when the Academy was asked to lend them for the famous exhibition of pictures held in that year at Manchester. The desired permission was granted, but the Keeper of the Royal Academy, John Prescott Knight, when giving evidence before the National Gallery Site Commission in February, 1857, said that it had been found necessary to clean the diploma pictures before they went to Manchester, as some of them were so obscured that even the subjects could not be guessed. "I have been watching the cleaning operations", said the Keeper, "and I must say that some of the pictures were so caked with filth (it was not dirt, it was a cake of filth upon them) that they were scarcely visible until the picture-cleaners employed at the Royal Academy had by frequent washings brought out the condition of the pictures. I was very much surprised to see what the pictures were. Now they are cleaned they are very different from what I had conceived them to be."

In October the Society of British Artists opened a remarkably interesting exhibition at their gallery in Suffolk Street. Its interest, however, was not centred in the work of the members of the Society but in a number of pictures by deceased English artists lent for exhibition by various collectors. Admiral Tolle-mache lent Gainsborough's *Two Shepherd Boys with Dogs Fighting* and a landscape by the same artist, as well as Sir Joshua's *Robinetta*. Landscapes by Wilson were contributed by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and others. The work of Hogarth, Morland, Zoffany, Mortimer, and Turner was also represented. Among the paintings by living artists were Mrs Carpenter's head of Bonington, and a landscape by Constable described in the catalogue as a sketch. Constable also lent from his collection a sketch of a landscape painted by Sir Joshua, and the exhibition of the two in the same room brought upon him another attack

by the *Morning Chronicle* critic, who said, in a notice published on October 7th:

It is not a secret worth knowing, but we have here learnt one—the origin of the happily inimitable style of Constable of the R.A. In the small room on the left is a landscape by Sir Joshua—several beautiful ones he painted, as might be expected from the excellence of his backgrounds—but this is a mere smear, the property of Mr Constable, R.A. and evidently the exemplar of his ambition, and, we must admit, felicitous rivalry. With this Mr Constable has also sent one of his own, No. 236, hanging opposite; in this case it is really a case of “handy-dandy, which is the master, which is the thief”, though it must be confessed that he has quite outsmearred his prototype. The room, as we have said, is small, and we don’t know how they might have looked a league off. This test has sometimes been to Mr Constable’s advantage—like his namesake he is always liked best at a distance.

On October 22nd, the Council Minutes of the Royal Academy record an application for aid from the widow of Adam Buck, who, owing to the sudden death of her husband, had been left with three children and very slender means. Assistance was given to her at once from the charitable fund. Adam Buck, the year of whose death is not mentioned in Bryan, was seventy-five when he died in August of this year, in Ebury Street, Pimlico. His small full-length portraits and studies of women and girls in watercolour or chalk, were very popular in the earlier years of the nineteenth century, but his prosperity had declined long before his death. He contributed no fewer than a hundred and seventy-two works to the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and was several times an unsuccessful candidate at the elections for Associateships.

Gilbert Stuart Newton, who had been elected an Academician in February, 1832, submitted his diploma picture, *Abelard*, to the Council in the summer of this year. It was duly accepted, and in December his name was placed on the list of members of the Council, upon which, however, he was never to serve, for in the same month he lost his reason, and was placed in a private asylum in Regent’s Park. There, and at a similar establishment in Chelsea, he lived until his death, which took place on August 5th, 1835, when he was in his forty-first year. No cause

for his mental failure has ever been assigned, but his friend Leslie hints that his manner was odd at times long before he was placed under restraint—perhaps even during those two brilliant and successful seasons in London of which his wife gives such attractive descriptions in her letters to America.

When Leslie visited Newton at the Chelsea asylum his conversation was rational enough except for occasional lapses; as when he showed his visitor a sketch in oil he had recently made. He said it represented Lady Strafford showing her son his father's portrait. He assured Leslie that Strafford was not executed, as supposed; that he vanished from the scaffold and was still living, and that he was the same person as Lorenzo de Medici, who had appeared in the world many times in different characters.

A lover of society, Newton was better qualified to shine in it than were most artists of his time. He was a man of education and excellent company, and had besides a distinguished air. Leslie says in connection with his fine appearance that when he and Newton were staying at Abbotsford to paint Sir Walter Scott, they made an excursion into the country of Burns, and met an old man who said he had often drunk whisky with the poet. Newton remarked that he must have been a delightful companion; but Burns was only "a silly chiel", in the opinion of his former acquaintance, who, looking with admiration at Newton, said, "But his brother, now, he was quite a gentleman—like you".

Most of Newton's pictures were painted at No. 41 Great Marlborough Street, a house which he occupied when a bachelor, and to which he brought his bride in 1832. He had congenial neighbours in the two brothers Chalon, who lived with their father and sister at No. 42. The father, who was a member of a French family long settled in Switzerland, had been domiciled in England for many years, and was for some time Professor of French at Sandhurst. His elder son, John James, was a landscape painter, whose best-known work is the *Hastings, Boats making the Shore in a Breeze* (234) at the Victoria and Albert

Museum; the younger, Alfred Edward, was the most popular painter of the day of women's portraits in water-colour. When Newton married, Alfred Edward was an Academician of sixteen years' standing, but his elder brother was still only an Associate and did not obtain Academic rank until 1841. The seniority of Alfred Edward as Academician is perhaps responsible for the mistakes about the ages of the Chalons in the histories of the Royal Academy by Sandby and Eaton. Both writers describe Alfred Edward as the elder brother.

Mrs Newton gives an interesting and amusing glimpse of her neighbours in Great Marlborough Street in a letter written on May 12th, 1833, in which she says:

Next door to us are the Chalons. Alfred Chalon is the famous and fashionable water-colour painter; so fond of painting ladies in flowing silks and airy laces that some of the artists published an advertisement in one of the morning papers to the effect that "muslins and laces would be done up equal to new at 19 Berners Street", which was his residence before he became our neighbour.

The Chalon family consists of Mr Chalon, a very old French gentleman, Alfred, John, and Miss Chalon. They are devoted to one another and the merriest people I ever saw. We hear them chattering away in French as they sit out on their leads, where they roll out a great easy chair for the old gentleman—and then such peals of laughter! I think Mr Chalon must be a very droll old man in his own language (he spoke very broken English when I called upon him) for they seem to laugh a great deal at what he says. Miss Chalon is very clever and an excellent woman. She is almost as tall as her brother Alfred, who is a large man with reddish hair. John Chalon is short and stout, and also a professional painter—paints landscapes in oil. The other night they went to a fancy dress ball; Miss Chalon and her brothers—she as a Swiss peasant, John as a Spanish peasant, and Alfred as a ballet dancer, though very dreadful and unfeminine he looked in low neck, lace petticoats, white silk stockings, satin shoes, and a Duchesse de Berri hat without a crown—just a brim turned up with feathers and the hair dressed above. They thought it great fun, but I thought it shocking—this great man with his shaven red beard and bare arms, but he was very cleverly gotten up.

It is impossible to imagine a Royal Academician of to-day going to a fancy dress ball in the attire of a ballet girl and it is surprising that Alfred Chalon in particular should have been

guilty of such a lapse from good taste; for both he and his brother were men of high character and respected by all their contemporaries. They were attached to one another in an extraordinary degree. "Their affection", says Leslie, "was the strongest I ever witnessed between relations. Indeed, the love and harmony in that family was such as, were it universal, would make this world a paradise." The brothers were as much attached to their sister as to one another. In 1856, after her death, Alfred Chalon sent to the Academy a contribution which puzzled the Council and is thus described and commented upon in the Minutes:

Mr A. E. Chalon having forwarded for exhibition a sculptured hand, ornamented with jewellery and lace, and called "Memorials", the Council resolved, that though receiving the work for exhibition they would not be responsible for any accident or loss, nor should the exhibition of the present work be made a precedent for the receipt of similar works in other years.

The Minutes contain no explanation of Chalon's singular contribution which was really a memorial of his sister. Apparently he withdrew it as it does not figure in the Academy catalogue of 1856. Anderdon, who saw it at Chalon's house, says when speaking of the artist's sister: "The talented Royal Academician deeply lamented her loss. At his gracefully adapted suburban retreat, *El Buen Retiro*, on Campden Hill, may be seen a cast of her delicate hand *in marble*, under shelter of glass."

The best known work of Alfred Chalon is the full-length portrait of Queen Victoria painted in water-colours—the first of several for which she sat after her accession. Chalon's portrait, which shows the Queen in the robes she wore at the dissolution of Parliament, was afterwards engraved by Cousins.

Two Associates of the Royal Academy were elected this year on November 4th, John Gibson, sculptor, and Thomas Uwins, painter. Before the election an objection was raised to Gibson's candidature on the ground that he lived abroad, in Rome, but it was overruled, and his name was allowed to remain upon the list. In the first contest Gibson defeated Uwins by sixteen votes to seven. In the second Uwins received eighteen votes to five cast for Simpson, the portrait painter.

Gibson, despite the objection raised as to his residing abroad, continued to live and work in Rome until his death in 1866. Two years earlier he had written to Sir Charles Eastlake, then President of the Royal Academy, about a proposed bequest to that institution. Canova, he said, left the models of some of his works to the Academy of his own country, and Thorwaldsen had left in similar fashion not only his models but most of his money. Gibson proposed to follow the example of these two artists, under both of whom he had studied, and in his letter he offered to leave to the Academy the greater part of his fortune on condition that a place should be provided in which his models could be seen by the public. The Academicians assented to his proposal, and after his death they received the casts and about £40,000 in money. Some of the casts are shown in the Gibson Gallery, which adjoins the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

## CHAPTER XIV

1834

THE work of Bonington increased steadily in value during the five years following his death in 1828, and at a sale in February, 1833, several pictures disposed of by Phillips the auctioneer realized prices that were never approached during the lifetime of the artist. The *View on the Grand Canal* was sold for three hundred and ninety guineas; *The Fish Market*, two hundred and ninety guineas; *Anne Page and Master Slender*, sixty guineas; and a landscape, *Lake Scene*, "a mere sketch, the work of half an hour", twenty-eight guineas. All were bought by the same collector, whose name, however, was not made public. Later in the same season the sale took place of a number of water-colours by Bonington, the property of Mr John Webb; and on July 8th the collection of Mrs Milieu came under the hammer. This was composed principally of small studies and sketches by the artist, and included a portrait in line, *A French Gentleman—early patron of Bonington*. In the autumn Bonington's father showed some of his son's work at his house in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury; but only as a preliminary to a more important exhibition organized by him in the spring of 1834.

This exhibition, opened on February 13th, was the one mentioned on p. 151, as described in *Notes and Queries* by "P. A. L." It was held in a well-lighted gallery at the Cosmoramic Rooms, 209 Regent Street, and was composed of such of Bonington's works as remained in the hands of his father; and of other pictures and sketches lent by different collectors, including the Duke of Bedford, the Marquis of Westminster, Robert Vernon, Samuel Rogers, and James Morrison.

Bonington's work at every period was to be seen at the Cosmoramic Rooms. "The interest of the exhibition", said

*The Times*, "is much enhanced by the presentation of some of the artist's juvenile attempts at drawing in juxtaposition with his more advanced works; thus offering the spectator the pleasing task of tracing the progress towards excellence of a man of acknowledged talent." Some of his earliest work was shown in a frame, No. 91, which contained eleven drawings made when he was between eleven and fifteen years of age. Drawings from the life, made in the Parisian art schools, were also included in the exhibition, which contained no fewer than three hundred and fifty items. This number seems very large when it is remembered that Bonington was only twenty-seven when he died.

It is unlikely that the three hundred and fifty exhibits included any forgeries, although it is known that Bonington's father was fond of making copies of his son's work; but that forgeries were already plentiful is shown by a note on the exhibition published by the *Morning Chronicle* on February 21st:

It has been got up by his father, and, for the merit of the son, well deserves the patronage of the town. They will find their reward in an exhibition of extraordinary works of talent in its various stages. The paintings, to which the Marquis of Westminster and Mr Vernon in particular have richly contributed, are more than forty; and the remainder are black-lead, chalk and sepia drawings. . . . Bonington, however, with all his merit, has been far over-rated in the prices given for his works. He died, and fashion made him an idol; and simpleheaded collectors have humoured folly-fashion to the top of her bent, but the rage did not and has not yet stopped within its legitimate bounds. We could have excused the extravagance had it spent itself on Bonington himself, but his empty shadow has come in for a vast share. Copies and imitations have been multiplied and spread in all directions.

However, no very high prices were realized when, on May 23rd, three weeks after the close of the exhibition, its contents, other than the borrowed pictures, were put up to auction by Christie, who advertised the sale as of:

The exquisite works of that celebrated artist, the late R. P. Bonington, collected by and the property of, his father, consisting of the capital oil pictures of *Henry the Third receiving the Spanish envoys*; *Quentin Durward*; the *Rialto at Venice*; *A Marine View*, etc. Among the drawings are some historic subjects; Marine Views with Shipping; views in Paris, Rouen, Abbeville, and other

towns in France and Italy; and studies of figures in water-colours, chalk and pencil. The whole forming a beautiful display of the brilliant talents of this extraordinary painter.

This sale is described by M. Dubuisson as “following the death of Bonington’s father”, but he makes no reference to that event, and Christie’s advertisement, quoted above, implies that the elder Bonington was alive in May, 1834. The following advertisement of another sale which suggests that he survived until 1836, appeared in the *Morning Post*, on April 26th of that year:

Messrs E. Foster and Sons have the honour to acquaint the lovers of the fine arts that they are directed by the executrix to sell by auction at the Gallery, 54 Pall Mall, on Friday, May 6th, at twelve, about forty pictures in oil or water-colours painted by that highly gifted genius the late R. P. Bonington Esq, being the specimens reserved by his family, to be sold in consequence of the death of his father.

The excavations for the east wing of the new National Gallery at Charing Cross, which had been in progress all the winter, were far advanced in February, when the foundation stone was laid. This was done without any ceremony, and according to the *Literary Gazette*, which commented on the strangeness of this proceeding, “not even the architect was present—the same mystery that has attended it all”. The *Literary Gazette* criticized with much freedom the affairs of the new National Gallery in general, and its design in particular, but its remarks were gentle in comparison with those of the *Spectator*, then a rising journal in the sixth year of its existence. The *Spectator* published the following note on February 15th:

#### THE NATIONAL GALLERY JOB

It is fit that the public should know that this precious job is now going on quietly; the usual ceremony of laying the foundation stone, which is rarely omitted even in the erection of a parish school, being prudently dispensed with. The architectural toadstool of Mr Wilkins has been suffered to take root, and its puny, shapeless form will rear itself to public view before people are well aware that the Ministerial Folly is really determined upon.

At the close of last session the whole affair was at sixes and sevens, neither

the site, the plan, the expense, nor the architect, were finally fixed upon. Mr Wilkins has, however, improved his opportunity, and, taking advantage of the indecision of Ministers and the absence of inconvenient Parliamentary querists, has got his appointments confirmed and his plans settled. The fortunate necessity, too, of removing the pictures from the old house in Pall Mall to a safer stowage, has come timely to his aid, and he has managed to begin the building before the commencement of the session.

The job, however, is not so far advanced as to prevent Parliamentary interference even now, and we call upon the independent members to arrest the progress of this vile job. We again denounce it as one by which the architect and the Royal Academy are to be benefited at the expense of the country.

The writer of the article in the *Spectator* was probably aware (though the facts had not been made public) that Nash and Cockerell had also submitted designs for a National Gallery, and his statement may have been correct that nothing had been settled up to the close of the Parliamentary session of 1833. For Wilkins, in his speech at the Royal Academy in July, 1832, did not say that he had been actually appointed to design the new building. There seems to have been an atmosphere of secrecy about the whole business that accounts for the suspicions of the *Literary Gazette*, the *Spectator* and other journals. These suspicions were evidently shared by Sir Robert Peel, as he shows by a letter written to John Wilson Croker in 1838, concerning the memorial arch and statue to Wellington, then about to be erected at Hyde Park Corner. Peel says:

How could you consent to such a job as selecting Mr Matthew Wyatt—a bad architect and worse sculptor—for the Duke of Wellington's trophy? The selection is bad, the principle worse. The cut and dried resolutions anticipating unanimity in favour of the protégé of two or three rich men, the said protégé being really the laughing stock of every body else, so far as art is concerned, are a bad precedent—a retroactive precedent if such a thing can be—justifying the selection of Wilkins for the National Gallery, of Soane for this folly and Nash for that; and every job which immortalizes its own disgrace from the durable materials in which it is recorded.

According to John Mitford, Wilkins did not submit his design for the National Gallery until the last moment. Mitford, who was intimate with Samuel Rogers, says when mentioning one of their conversations: "Mr Rogers said that Wilkins the architect



*From the picture by Frederick Mackenzie in the Victoria & Albert Museum*

THE PRINCIPAL ROOM OF THE ORIGINAL NATIONAL GALLERY



was sitting with him. 'Why don't you send in a design for the National Gallery?' 'There is no time—it is to-morrow.' 'Try.' He sat up all night—sent one in—instantly accepted against Cockerell and Nash. The details from Stuart's Athens." Rogers was a member of the Committee appointed by the Treasury to judge the designs.

The enforced removal of the national pictures from No. 100 Pall Mall, mentioned by the *Spectator*, was due to a partial collapse of the house caused by the excavations for the foundation of the Reform Club, the building of which had just been commenced. The pictures were removed in February to another house close at hand, No. 105 Pall Mall, next door to the Travellers' Club; and No. 100, once the residence of John Julius Angerstein, was pulled down. It had been merely a makeshift for a National Gallery, and none of its apartments were fit for the exhibition of pictures, except the principal drawing-room, in which a top-light was made after the acquisition of the house by the Government. A good idea of the appearance of the drawing-room and its pictures is given by a water-colour at the Victoria and Albert Museum, painted by Frederick Mackenzie. This drawing was exhibited at the Watercolour Society's gallery in 1834. It is described in the Museum catalogue as *Interior of Mr Angerstein's Gallery in Pall Mall, showing the 38 pictures purchased from him by the Government*, but this is misleading. The picture represents the drawing-room as it appeared ten years after Angerstein's death, with the new top-light and with many pictures added to his original collection.

Mackenzie's title was *The principal Room of the original National Gallery, formerly the residence of John Julius Angerstein Esq., lately pulled down*. When the picture was exhibited in 1834, it was praised for its exact truthfulness of representation, and was described by the *Literary Gazette* as "a marvellous picture in every respect—a National Gallery in itself".

No view appears to exist of the interior of No. 105 Pall Mall, which a few years earlier had been the residence of Sir Walter Stirling, the sale of whose collection of works by Highmore

I have described in Chapter VI. Its accommodation was no better than that of Angerstein's house, and the lighting worse, to judge by the complaints of some of those who visited it in the spring, to see the two Correggios, *Mercury instructing Cupid before Venus* and *Christ presented to the People* (then called *Ecce Homo*), which the Government had just purchased from Lord Londonderry. The critic of the *Spectator*, who went to the house for this purpose, says of the poverty of the illumination: "We had not before seen the National Collection in its new lodging. It looks more numerous than it did; the pictures being scattered. We will say nothing of the light, or darkness, rather, in which many of them are hung, because their abiding place is temporary, and we were glad to be able to see even a few". There was, however, no difficulty in seeing the Correggios which were not hung upon the walls, but shown on stands specially made for them and placed in the best light the rooms afforded.

They were bought from Lord Londonderry for £11,500, the largest sum expended on pictures by the Government since the purchase of the Angerstein collection. The amount was regarded at the time as prodigious and the opinions of several experts were taken as to their value before the purchase was concluded. Sir Charles Eastlake says, in a letter quoted in his *Memoir*, that it was not until 1841 that the Trustees of the National Gallery decided to take the opinions of artists before buying an important picture. But in this he was mistaken. William Seguer, the Keeper of the National Gallery, on behalf of the Trustees, obtained the opinions of Wilkie, Hilton, Howard and Richard Westall on the two Correggios, before it was decided to acquire them. They all approved of the purchase of the pictures for £12,000, the price originally asked. The following is Wilkie's letter:

7 Terrace, Kensington,

March 1st, 1834

My dear Sir

After reviewing with much attention the two pictures by Correggio, the *Ecce Homo* and the *Mercury teaching Cupid to read*, belonging to the Marquis of Londonderry, I have great pleasure in expressing to you my hope that they may become the property of the Nation.

They are undoubtedly originals of this great Italian painter, possessing, with the fascinations of light and shadow so peculiar to him, that richness of colour and intensity of expression which give to his works so much of their value and their influence; and whether to interest the public in the higher purposes of art or to guide the taste of the student, would to the Gallery now forming be a most desirable acquisition.

Of the justness of the sum for which they are offered, £12,000, I cannot from my experience in such transactions be a judge. It is certainly a large sum for two pictures, but, giving this difficulty its due weight, I would decidedly concur in giving this sum, rather than let them go out of the country, considering the rarity of such specimens even in foreign countries, and their excellence as examples of the high school to which they belong, to which it must be the aim of every other school to approximate.

David Wilkie.

William Seguir, Esq.

When the critic of the *Sunday Times* described the Correggios he mentioned that they were covered with glass. "This", he said, "is much to be regretted." It was the expression of the general opinion of the time, which was opposed to the glazing of oil paintings exhibited in public galleries. The only one in the National Gallery that had been so protected hitherto was an earlier Correggio, the *Vierge au Panier* (23), acquired in 1825. During the twenty-five years that followed the purchase of the Londonderry Correggios, Ruskin and George Richmond, R.A., declared themselves in favour of glazing the whole of the pictures, even those of the largest size. Both recommended the practice on the ground that the glass preserved the paint beneath it, but Ruskin claimed also that it added to the beauty of the pictures.

"Glass", said Ruskin, "gives an especial delicacy to light colours and does little harm to dark ones." However, glass was seldom used at the National Gallery until comparatively recent times, and in 1854 the protected pictures did not number more than about a dozen, including the three Correggios. Among the others were Van Eyck's *Jan Arnolfini and his Wife* (186) and his *Portrait of a Man* (222), and the little Raphael, the *Vision of a Knight* (213), all of which were glazed before they were exhibited; the Francia, *The Madonna and Child and St Anne* (179); and

the *Christ Teaching* (18) by Luini. The first modern pictures glazed, in 1855, were *The Parish Beadle* (241), *The Village Festival* (122), and *The Blind Fiddler* (99), all by Wilkie. It was decided later that all the pictures in the National Gallery should be glazed, as Ruskin and Richmond had suggested, and by 1892 this had been accomplished.

While the National Gallery pictures were being removed from Angerstein's house to their second temporary resting place at No. 105 Pall Mall, Christie, the auctioneer, was preparing an exhibition of works of uncommon interest by Dutch and Flemish masters. The pictures, about a hundred and thirty in number, were the collection of the late Duc de Berri and had been sent from Paris in February to be offered for sale in London. They were not, however, to come under the hammer of Christie in the ordinary fashion, but to be exhibited at his house in King Street and disposed of, if possible, at fixed prices. There is, therefore, no record of this sale in the auction lists of Redford or Graves. The exhibition was opened in the second week in April, and on the 14th the *Morning Chronicle* published the following note on the progress of the sale:

The private and public exhibition for sale of the Dutch and Flemish pictures of the late Duc de Berri, at Christie's smaller but more eligible room in King Street, St James's, has occupied the attention of all the nobility, artists, and patrons of art during the last week. The pictures are to be sold by private contract and the lowest price has been put upon each. Nine or ten have already been sold. Mr Beckford of Fonthill (now of Bath) has purchased a beautiful cabinet picture by Gerard Dou—a Dutch girl gathering a pink—for £500. Sir Robert Peel has acquired for £280 *Two Children at Play* by Caspar Netscher. A landscape by Albert Cuyp has been bought by Mr Bevan for £480. Messrs Woodburn have bought a landscape (with flooded country) by Wouwerman, £500. Mr Nieuwenhuys purchased a sweet picture by Vanderveelde (*A Calm*) for £500. All the higher-priced pictures are as yet unsold.

The picture by Caspar Netscher bought by Sir Robert Peel is now in the National Gallery, No. 843, *Blowing Bubbles*.

Other pictures mentioned in later reports as sold were *La Course aux Harengs*, by Wouwerman, £500; *A Falconer on a white*

*Horse*, by the same artist, £300 (Lord Lansdowne); a landscape by Wynants, £300; and another by Ruysdael, £120; and *Candlelight*, by Schalcken, £280 (Mr Stone the banker); *Village Cabaret*, by Teniers, £80, and *An Interior*, by Metzsu, £80 (Sir Edward Sugden); *The Rialto*, by Canaletto, £60 (Mr Smith); *A Young Lady*, by Ochtervelt, £60 (Mr Zachary); *An Inn*, by Berchem, £80 (Mr Smith); *An Italian Landscape*, by Breenbergh, £80 (Sir J. Stewart); *Le Retour du Marché*, by Netscher, £400; *A Squall*, by Bakhuizen, £320; and *Interior of a Cabaret*, by Ostade, £800.

The more highly priced pictures remained unsold and the names of only two or three of them are mentioned in the published accounts of the sales. One was *The Fair of Ghent*, by Teniers, for which £1400 was asked; and another, *The Great Horse Fair*, by Wouwerman. The price of the Wouwerman was £2000 and the *Morning Post* lamented at the end of the sale that it had not been acquired for the National Gallery. However, it was bought twenty years afterwards by Lord Hertford, and is now in the Wallace Gallery, No. 65, *The Horse Fair*. The most famous picture in the exhibition at Christie's—also unsold—was Terburg's *Congress of Münster*, described in the catalogue as "esteemed by the artist his *chef d'œuvre*". The Terburg went back to Paris, where it was bought in 1868 by the Marquis of Hertford for £7200. The Marquis bequeathed it to Sir Richard Wallace, and he, in 1871, presented it to the National Gallery, whose walls it has ever since adorned.

Lord Lansdowne (the third Marquis), who bought a Wouwerman from the de Berri collection, had been the fortunate purchaser some years earlier of *The Mill* by Rembrandt, for which he gave only a few hundred pounds. This landscape was sold by his grandson, for, it is said, a hundred thousand pounds. The third Marquis was a more fortunate, or perhaps a more discerning buyer than his father, some of whose pictures were sold at Christie's while the de Berri collection was on view. They were the property of the Dowager Marchioness of Lansdowne, and included a large canvas, *Venus, Cupid and Vulcan*, which

was catalogued as a Rubens. It was knocked down for fifty guineas, although, before it was put up, Mr Christie produced a receipt showing that it had cost the late Marquis no less than fifteen hundred.

The retirement from business this spring of Thomas Hamlet, the King's goldsmith and jeweller, was followed by the sale of most, if not all, of his collections of pictures, armour, and objects of art. Hamlet was, or had been, extremely rich, and had lived in great style in Cavendish Square. Northcote, who visited him, remarked afterwards on "his wealth, his splendid furniture and his servants". His fine pictures were known to all the amateurs in London. The most important of those remaining in his hands were sold in March by Robins, together with his armour and silver, the last mentioned including twelve silver salvers, each supported by a shaft and adorned with the figure of one of the twelve Cæsars. It was said that they were the work of Cellini, that they were presented by one of the Cardinals to Francis the First, and that they had remained among the treasures of the French Royal family until the Revolution. They were sold by Robins in one lot for a thousand guineas. Hamlet used to speculate, and he fell upon evil times, and was made a bankrupt in 1841.

George Redford, the compiler of the well-known *Art Sales*, knew him late in life, when he was poor, and says that he frequently regretted selling his priceless Titian, the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, to the National Gallery, with two other of his pictures, for only £9000. George Augustus Sala, after remarking in his *Life and Adventures* that Thomas Marsh Nelson designed the Junior United Service Club, Lord Rothschild's house in Piccadilly, and the original Princess's Theatre, says: "He built the Princess's for the famous Hamlet—Thackeray's 'Mr Polonius'—the silversmith of Cranborne Alley who amassed an immense fortune, but muddled it away in disastrous speculations, among which was a large investment in Royal Bonds which was never paid, and who died at last a Brother of the Charterhouse. The Princess's achieved the ruin of Hamlet".

The death of Thomas Stothard on April 27th deprived the Royal Academy of one of its oldest members, the oldest, in fact, with the exception of Robert Smirke. Stothard had been a member of the Royal Academy for forty years, and its Librarian twenty years. On the day following his death an old friend contributed to the *Morning Chronicle* some reminiscences of him that add a little to the information given in Mrs Bray's biography. According to Stothard's friend, his first employer, who died during his apprenticeship, was a calico printer, not a pattern-drawer for brocaded silks, as Mrs Bray states. Young Stothard was a favourite with the calico printer's widow and spent his leisure in making drawings for her. These she arranged on the mantel-shelf of her sitting-room, where one day they attracted the notice of a visitor. He was struck by the merit of the drawings and showed some of them to a publisher, and this was the starting-point of Stothard's career, during the earlier part of which he drew designs for fashions for the *Lady's Magazine*.

Stothard is described as of about the middle size, of compact make, and exceedingly active. Until nearly the end of his life he enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health, and walked fifty miles in a day when he was sixty years old. The collecting of moths and butterflies was one of his hobbies, and the writer of the reminiscences in the *Morning Chronicle* says that in this pursuit he had ranged with Stothard all the woods within twenty miles of London. Of his character, and of his opinions of some of his contemporaries, we are told:

As a man Stothard could have no enemy. His character was simplicity itself. He was always liberal in opening the rich stores of his knowledge to all who stood in need of his aid. Never was there a less assuming and more disinterested individual. He hated all collision with bustling, arrogant men and took care to avoid them. We have seldom heard him speak with bitterness but when he had occasion to name insolent, assuming individuals. Barry the artist he thought little of, and he had a very low opinion of Fuseli. We have heard him say that of all the men he had known Mr Opie had the strongest sense and the clearest conception of most subjects.

Northcote, it will be remembered, had the same high opinion of Opie's intellectual powers. "For originality of mind", he said, "Opie was certainly the greatest man I ever saw."

The obituaries of Stothard published in the newspapers and magazines were entirely eulogistic, and he appears to have enjoyed the respect and admiration of his fellow-artists almost without exception. Lawrence, writing to the Reverend Edward Bury in 1827, said: "Mr Stothard is perhaps the first genius, after Mr Fuseli and Mr Flaxman, that the English school or modern Europe has known".

More than four years had now elapsed since the death of Lawrence, and his star, once so bright, had dimmed a little. But his name was brought into prominence again by the renewed attempts made in the spring and summer to acquire his superb collection of drawings for the nation. Lawrence had directed in his will that this collection, "which in number and value I know to be unequalled in Europe", should be offered for £18,000 in turn to the King and to the British Museum, and, if it were declined by them, then to Lord Dudley and Sir Robert Peel. The drawings were declined by all the parties mentioned in the will; and six months after Lawrence's death an attempt was made to buy them for the nation by means of a public subscription. This also was a failure, although the Royal Academy appointed five of its members, Hilton, Phillips, Howard, Cook and Jones, to examine the collection and, as their report was favourable, agreed to subscribe a thousand pounds.

The drawings had remained in the hands of Lawrence's executor, Keightley, a former schoolfellow and friend of Eastlake, who was now endeavouring to induce the Government to purchase them for the National Gallery. Eastlake knew better than any one else the extraordinary value of the drawings, and when and how Lawrence had obtained them. He had often discussed them with their collector, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and since Lawrence's death had been allowed frequent access to them by Keightley. Armed with this knowledge, and with the idea of arousing the interest of the public in the

matter, Eastlake supplied William Brockedon, the artist, author and inventor, with the material for an article on the history of Lawrence's collection, which appeared in the newspapers above the signature "Veritas". The essential portions of the article are contained in the following extracts:

The public have little idea of the value—the mere marketable value—of this extraordinary collection. Sir Thomas Lawrence acknowledged to an outlay of £60,000, for what he directed by his will should be offered to the nation for £18,000. Often, in order to possess himself of these precious and exquisite specimens of art, he paid sums which he was reluctant to record, and in one instance within the writer's knowledge, he left a memorandum of what he had paid one-third less than the sum actually given. The character of this collection, the research, care, and cost of its formation, are not sufficiently known; and it is difficult to make it known without incurring the suspicion of interested motives for doing so. I will not, however, be deterred by the fear of being misunderstood (my name is in your possession) from stating what I know of the collection, though I have not seen one of these drawings since Sir Thomas Lawrence's death.

The well-known specimens which were formerly in the collections of Richardson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, West, Ottley and other celebrated collectors, were gradually brought together in Sir Thomas Lawrence's; but the astonishing number of drawings by Michael Angelo and Raphael could only have been collected by a concurrence of circumstances which can never happen again.

At the time of the invasion of Italy by the French a Commission was appointed to select the best works of art, and one of the Commissioners, the Chevalier Wycart, became possessed of a great number of the finest drawings of Michael Angelo and Raphael. The choice of his collection was purchased by Mr Woodburn and is now to be found among the Lawrence drawings.

The celebrated cabinet of Monsieur Crozat, called the *Cabinet du Roi*, was chosen from a numerous selection of drawings originally in the possession of the executors of Raphael; the remainder of these drawings descended to Count Antaldi, of Ancona, from whom Mr Woodburn purchased them. The catalogue showed what drawings had been purchased in the last century by Monsieur Crozat. Lastly, the Crozat collection itself was almost entirely purchased, and thus the original collection possessed by Raphael's executors has by singular exertions, and good fortune, been united. The Arundel collection of Parmigianos, which passed into the hands of Zenetti of Venice, more than a century ago, has also been added, having been restored to this country greatly augmented. The sale of Monsieur Denon again enriched the

portfolio of the late President; and on the death of Mr Dimsdale, who was his rival collector, the whole of the Raphaels possessed by that gentleman became the property of Sir Thomas Lawrence. The drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, of Correggio, of the Carracci and Guercino; of Claude, of Rubens, of Vandyck, and of Rembrandt in this extraordinary collection have, perhaps, never yet been surpassed in number, certainly not in excellence.

When the French invaded Austria General Andreossi was enabled to possess himself of the finest Albert Dürers in Vienna, and at the sale of the General's property the whole of them were added to the treasures above-mentioned. The studies of Bellini, Titian, Giorgione and Paul Veronese, for many of their celebrated works are to be found here, together with the whole of the series of Primaticcio's designs for the galleries at Fontainebleau, the Poussins of the Mariette collection; and many admirable specimens of art from Cimabue, Giotto, Mantegna and others, to the time of Fra Bartolommeo.

The National Gallery in Pall Mall, might, if tomorrow destroyed, be replaced by works of equal excellence, by the same masters at the same cost; but this collection of drawings, once broken, can never be restored at any price, for the accident can never again be hoped for which brought them together, supposing even unlimited means.

But the publication of the article made little or no impression, and the efforts of Eastlake to induce the Government to keep the drawings in the country were unavailing. He knew that Lord Althorp, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would oppose any vote of money for such a purpose. "Lord Althorp", he said, "sets his face against the arts altogether, and said once that if he had his way he would sell the National Gallery and have nothing of the kind."

Eastlake therefore approached other Ministers, among them the Lord Chancellor (Lord Brougham), who had an open mind on the subject and expressed a wish to see some of the drawings, if the executor would entrust them to him and if Eastlake would describe them. "I attended, therefore," says Eastlake in a letter written in April, "on Good Friday, at two o'clock at the Lord Chancellor's new residence in Great Stanhope Street. Lord Lansdowne and his daughter, Prince Talleyrand, Lady Sefton, Lord Moncrieff, and several others were present. The best place for seeing the drawings was given to Talleyrand, and

the conversation was conducted in French, on his account. I had more, of course, to say than anybody, as I was asked questions about every drawing; and even while talking with the Chancellor the conversation was still in French (and at least I beat him there!) which was amusing enough. After having seen all the selection, Talleyrand said, '*Si vous n'achetez pas ces choses là, vous êtes des barbares*', in which the two Cabinet Ministers agreed."

An examination of the manuscript catalogue of Lawrence's collection compiled by Woodburn the picture-dealer, in the presence of the artist's executor, Keightley, shows that it contained, roughly, about a hundred and twenty drawings by Michael Angelo, two hundred by Raphael, a hundred and twenty by Rubens, eighty by Albert Dürer, sixty by Nicolas Poussin, fifty by Titian, sixty by Vandyck, fifty by Leonardo da Vinci, a hundred by Claude, a hundred and forty by Parmigiano, and a hundred by Rembrandt. Hundreds of drawings by other artists were also included in this incomparable collection, which, unfortunately, was not obtained for the National Gallery in spite of all the efforts of Eastlake and his supporters. The Government declined to provide the money, and ultimately the drawings were sold to Woodburn by the long-suffering executor, who in June, 1835, informed the Royal Academy that they had passed out of his hands. He said that he regretted the failure of his endeavours to keep the collection together and that Woodburn's offer to purchase it was the only one that had been made to him.

According to R. J. Lane, A.R.A., the engraver, £15,000 was the price paid by Woodburn, who held exhibitions of selected examples of the drawings from time to time, and gradually disposed of the whole collection. Some of the finest drawings were sold to the King of Holland and were seen by Wilkie, when he visited The Hague in 1840, adorning three rooms of the Prince of Orange. Lane says that Sir Robert Peel bought a few drawings from Woodburn at a high price, and that he always regretted that he had not acquired the entire collection, when it was offered to him after Lawrence's death. Fortunately some

of the drawings by Michael Angelo and Raphael remain to us. These were purchased by the University of Oxford (with the assistance of Lord Eldon) and are now in the Ashmolean Museum.

At the exhibition of the Royal Academy (arranged this year by Mulready, Jones, and Sir Jeffry Wyatville, the architect) Wilkie was again assigned some of the best places in the Great Room, in which were hung his full-lengths of the Queen wearing her Coronation robes, and the Duke of Wellington in his uniform as Constable of the Tower. Wilkie describes the positions of these portraits and of two of his pictures in a letter written on May 2nd to Sir William Knighton:

We were let in (to varnish) last Monday, but I have waited till the day of the private view to inform you of the placing of my pictures. The Queen is in the centre, over the fireplace; the *Not at Home* underneath, and next the centre picture and *The Spanish Mother*. *The Spanish Mother* appeared to be thought by all to look so well that not a touch was proposed, and not a touch either of oil or varnish was put upon it, a wash of cold water being found all that was wanted to make it bear out with the pictures round it. The Duke of Wellington is at the head of the room, Sir Martin Shee's King being in the centre; it is on the right of the King, with a picture between, and—though a distinguished place—rather too near the corner. The Duke is to dine at the Academy to-day; he may think it a little too much towards the side; but I am more than satisfied, as I have *four* pictures in the Great Room and *three* in prime places.

Wilkie's work was praised by some of the critics, but received coldly by others who reserved their highest praise for Landseer; an artist of steadily increasing reputation, who in a few years was to rank as the most popular painter of the British school, not excepting Maclise. At this exhibition he showed his well-known *Scene of the Olden Time at Bolton Abbey* (13), which was the subject of general, and occasionally extravagant, eulogy. *The Times*, when noticing Landseer's picture, said, "It is difficult to praise it as much as it deserves"; and the critic of the *Morning Post* regretted that he could find no decent reason for speaking ill of the *Bolton Abbey*. He declared that he was so exhausted with perpetual admiration of Mr Landseer's per-

formances that if they continued to appear in exhibitions he had come to a determination to strike. "This one single picture," he said, "to give it its due, would fill up a column of commendation, and all our fine epithets and technical terms would be worn out before we could finish."

Not much attention was paid to the portraits at the Academy, except that of the King by Shee, and of the Queen and the Duke of Wellington by Wilkie. One of the few praised by *The Times* was that of Wordsworth, painted by H. W. Pickersgill for St John's College, Cambridge, the sittings for which appear to have been pleasant both to the poet and the painter. Wordsworth writing to a Cambridge friend soon after they were finished, said: "The process of painting the picture in which we were engaged when we had the pleasure of seeing you and Mr Thorp, proved very agreeable. We found Mr Prothersgill (!) a truly pleasant companion, he improved very much upon us as his peculiarities of manner wore off. I hope you and my friends in general will approve the portrait when it reaches its destination".

Turner's contributions to the exhibition included nothing abnormal, and for once he escaped adverse criticism. All his pictures were admired, particularly the *Venice* (175) and *The Fates and the Golden Bough* (75). The last-named work had one peculiarity in the shape of a paper figure which escaped notice while it remained at the Academy. *The Fates and the Golden Bough* was given to the nation, among other pictures, by Robert Vernon in 1847, and the curious story of the paper figure is told in the *Recollections* of his nephew, Vernon Heath. He says that *The Fates and the Golden Bough* was bought by his uncle from the painter before it was exhibited, and after the close of the Academy was sent to Vernon's house in Pall Mall. It was not until some years afterwards that Vernon Heath, who lived with his uncle, noticed that there was something wrong with the figure of the Sibyl holding the golden bough, which seemed to be separating itself from the paint of the foreground. His uncle sent him to John Seguiet, the picture-restorer, to whom he described what he had seen. Seguiet, however, declined to

have anything to do with the picture, on the ground that he refused at all times to touch a Turner. Heath was then sent to Turner's house, in Queen Anne Street, where, he says, his reception by the artist was anything but gracious:

He listened to my statement with evident impatience, but in the end undertook to call at Pall Mall. When he came he mounted on a chair, put his thumbnail under the slightly raised part of the figure, and in an instant exclaimed, "Why this is only paper! I remember now all about it. I determined, the picture being all but finished, to paint a nude figure in the foreground, and with this intention went one night to the Life School at the Royal Academy, and made a sketch in my note book. Finding, next day, that it was the exact size I required my figure to be, I carefully, by its outline, cut it out of the book and fixed it on to the picture, intending, when I had time, to paint the figure in properly. But I forgot it entirely, and do not think I should have remembered it but for you".

The picture of *The Fates and the Golden Bough* was then sent to Turner's house, where the present figure of the Sibyl was painted in.

Another paper figure—that of a dog—still exists in a picture by Turner—*Mortlake Terrace, Summer's Evening*, and some writers have assumed that it was placed there by the artist. But Frederick Goodall, R.A., whose father engraved some of Turner's pictures, and who himself had known the great landscape painter, accounts in a different way for the presence of the paper dog. He says in his *Reminiscences*:

There is an anecdote concerning Landseer for which I can vouch. He cut out a little dog in paper, painted it black, and on Varnishing Day, stuck it upon the terrace in Turner's picture, *Mortlake Terrace, Summer's Evening*. All wondered what Turner would say and do when he came up from the luncheon table at noon. He went up to the picture quite unconcernedly, never said a word, adjusted the little dog perfectly, and then varnished the paper and began painting it. And there it is to the present day.

Seguier's refusal to touch the figure in *The Fates and the Golden Bough* was due only to the fear of Turner's wrath at any meddling with his picture. Within a year after Turner's death Seguier undertook the cleaning and repairing of *The Sun rising through Vapour* and the *Dido building Carthage*, which the artist left to the

National Gallery on condition that they should be hung beside two famous Claudes. The *Dido building Carthage* was in such a condition through dirt and neglect that the paint was flaking off in large pieces, and when Uwins, the Keeper of the National Gallery, superintended the removal of the picture from Turner's house, he was obliged to have it dusted down before it could be placed in the van. "The pavement in front of the door", said Uwins, "looked afterwards almost as if a chimney had been swept upon it."

Constable, owing to ill-health, sent to the Academy this year four drawings only, and therefore the critic of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Observer* had little opportunity of attacking him except in a note on the absence or the poor representation of several artists. After expressing his regret, in the *Morning Chronicle*, at finding nothing by "poor Newton, who is never likely to return"; and mentioning a picture which Etty had intended to exhibit but was unable to finish in time, he said: "Another defaulter, as it regards new pieces, is something, but not much—we mean Mr Constable. Still, 'We could better have spared a better man', for his works ever made him the Mr Merriman of the show. Many a smile and right good guffaw is lost by his absence".

This, published on May 5th, was the last sneer at Constable made by the critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, as in June, he was dismissed by the editor of that journal. The principal cause of his downfall was a brutal comment on a portrait of Harriet Martineau, who, although still in the early thirties, had already made her mark as a writer of somewhat advanced views on social questions, and whose *Illustrations of Political Economy* had lately been the subject of considerable discussion. The comment on her portrait, and a second paragraph referring to her, were included in a notice of the Academy exhibition published on May 25th in the *Morning Chronicle*. On June 4th appeared an apology by the Editor:

We regret exceedingly the appearance of the following articles in a criticism on the Fine Arts, which lately, from accident, were suffered to appear in the *Chronicle*:

No. 138. *Miss Harriet Martineau*. R. Evans. We never could understand why Monsieur Ude put a print of his head in front of his cookery book, except as a calf's head in a plate. This likeness of Miss Martineau would, if true in all its markings and expression, be far more intelligible as a frontispiece to her works—nothing she has written could so operate as “a check to population”.

No. 164. *The Gentle Reader*. H. Wyatt. Mr Wyatt has not improved. He has nothing at the R.A. equal to his previous works. The shawl and dress in this piece are bad in colour, and the blue ribbon injudiciously introduced. The lady, who probably squinted, is represented as falling asleep over her book—one of Miss Martineau's tracts. It is therefore in these two parts unhappily conceived.

We regret this the more as an ill-natured paragraph against Miss Martineau found its way into the *Chronicle*, to the great annoyance of the Editor. Miss Martineau is a clever writer who may occasionally be in error (as who is not?) but we do not see why she should be singled out for coarse abuse. Without proscribing satire or ridicule, which is very well in its proper place, we dislike all attempts to give pain to individuals by making mirth of their bodily sufferings or bodily defects. Why should Miss Martineau and her friends be subjected to the pain of reading coarse abuse of her person merely because she writes on subjects which are usually treated of by men? One of the very best works on political economy was written by a lady (Mrs Marcet) and why may not Miss Martineau choose the same branch of science? We owe this apology to an ingenious lady, and we trust that neither she nor any of her friends will believe that the abuse was countenanced by us. We will take care that the offence shall not be repeated.

I have been unable to trace in the *Morning Chronicle* the “ill-natured paragraph” to which its Editor refers as reflecting on Harriet Martineau. But a year earlier, curiously enough, a woman of the same name had figured in the police reports of the paper, and in one of them, the authoress, through her own action, had been referred to indirectly. In the report from the Hatton Garden Police Court, published in the *Morning Chronicle* of July 5th, 1833, was the following:

Yesterday a female of fashionable appearance who gave her name as Miss Harriet Martineau, was charged by Mr Henry Barber, of Margaret Street, Wilmington Square, who stated about a fortnight ago the defendant, who said she was the widow of an officer, engaged apartments at his house. In a short time she introduced several gentlemen. He remonstrated. She said

one was her solicitor, another, elderly, was her dear uncle; another, a dashing young fellow, was her dear cousin. Others, she said, with apparent grief, were friends of her late respected husband. He gave her notice, she refused to accept it and he bolted her out, when she made a great disturbance and used very unbecoming language. Ordered to find bail.

A week later Miss Martineau was brought up again at the same Court charged with assaulting Mrs Barber, her landlady, who complained that she was still in possession and now introduced her friends by the window. She was fined five shillings. "Mr Barber said that in consequence of the first examination at the police court a young authoress had called upon him and seemed fearful that some of her friends might confound her with his lodger."

The objectionable paragraph about Harriet Martineau's portrait appeared in the *Observer* as well as in the *Morning Chronicle*. But no apology was made by the *Observer*, for which the critic continued to write, and to worry Constable, for another year. His dismissal from the *Morning Chronicle* was probably due to a change of proprietorship early in the year, when it was sold by William Clement, to whom until then both papers had belonged. It is curious that in the violent attacks on their joint critic, made in the *Examiner*, *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts*, and other journals, the *Morning Chronicle* is only mentioned once. It is always the *Observer* that is blamed, although the Sunday criticisms were usually briefer than those of the daily paper and, as far as they went, identical with them.

Not one of those who attack the critic mentions his name, but he is described in a long and abusive letter published in February, 1834, in *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts*. "Many", says the writer, "have attributed these precious effusions to some young and inconsiderate fool who has no other means of amusing himself, but the worthy from whom they emanate is well-known. He is neither young nor inconsiderate, but an old grey-headed dotard of the Gallic breed, a member of that most worthy profession, the law." The Editor of the magazine, in a note on the subject, says: "We are not alone in the idea that

the unfortunate man who pens these articles is radically and irrecoverably mad, and we are almost ready to say the same of the conduct of those persons who allow their columns to be filled with the vapid trash and miserable nonsense of this critical mountebank”.

But the subject of this vituperation, though sadly wanting in taste and with occasional lapses into vulgarity, was by no means mad. His comments on Harriet Martineau's portrait were unpardonable and his incessant attacks upon Constable unjust and unfair, but his criticisms generally on artists and art politics were often sensible and sometimes uncommonly well informed. He was a severe critic of the amateur administrators of the British Institution and of the management of the infant National Gallery, and no friend to the Academy with whose private affairs he occasionally betrayed an intimate acquaintance. He was an amusing writer with a sense of humour, and the *Morning Chronicle* suffered when he ceased to contribute to its columns.

At the summer exhibition of the British Institution, composed of works by deceased artists, English and foreign, the whole of the South Room was filled with pictures from the Marquis of Westminster's collection at Grosvenor House. One of the principal attractions was a group of three famous canvases hanging side by side in the South Room: one by Sir Joshua, *Mrs Siddons in the character of the Tragic Muse*; and two by Gainsborough, *The Cottage Door*, and *A Young Gentleman in a Landscape—the picture known as the Boy in Blue*. The last named was one of the works allowed to remain at the British Institution to be copied in the Painting School after the close of the season. It was so much admired by the students that when their work was shown in November copies of the *Blue Boy* covered entirely one of the end walls of the South Room.

The *Blue Boy*, the portrait of Mrs Graham at Edinburgh, and the group of young Mr Hallet with his bride and his dog, in a landscape, known as *The Morning Walk*, are often spoken of as the three finest full-lengths by Gainsborough. Of the history of *The Morning Walk* from 1786, when it was painted, until it was

acquired by the late Lord Rothschild, we know little, but some advertisements published in the year of which I am now writing show that it was offered for sale by auction while the *Blue Boy* was being exhibited at the British Institution. The following advertisement appeared in *The Times* of August 6th, 1834:

A PICTURE BY GAINSBOROUGH. Messrs Foster and Son will have the honour to submit to Public Auction, at the Gallery, 54 Pall Mall, on Saturday, August 9th, unless a favourable offer should be previously made, of which due notice will be given, a capital picture, whole-length, by Gainsborough, which has been allowed by an eminent artist to be "in his finest style", if not the best picture he ever painted.

It represents a lady and gentleman in the dress of forty-eight years ago, including a landscape and a Pomeranian dog, admirably executed. Although the portraits were faithful likenesses, the circumstance neither adds to nor diminishes the worth of the picture which must ever be esteemed a most valuable performance of that much-admired master. It may be viewed at Messrs Foster's Gallery, 54 Pall Mall, where tickets and particulars may be obtained.

Gainsborough's group was advertised in similar terms in other newspapers, and before it was sent to the auction room was on view for some time, by ticket only, at Mr Peel's, No. 17 Golden Square. But in spite of this publicity there were no bidders when *The Morning Walk* was put up for sale on August 9th. This I discovered from the priced catalogue of the sale which Messrs Foster kindly allowed me to see. The picture is not numbered in the catalogue, but the following printed note on a separate sheet of paper is pasted into it: "GAINSBOROUGH. Whole-length portrait of a Lady and Gentleman walking in a Garden, a Pomeranian Dog looking anxiously at the Lady. Undoubtedly one of the Master's best works". There is nothing else in the catalogue about the Gainsborough except the word "passed", written in pen and ink beneath its title. It is interesting to speculate upon the price *The Morning Walk* would realize at auction to-day.

Among the popular exhibitions of the year was the "Padorama", shown in the Saloon at the Baker Street Bazaar. This was a panoramic view of the most interesting parts of the

country traversed by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. The scenery, supposed to be viewed as the spectator passed by it in a train, was illustrated by immense paintings, described as extremely well executed. The exhibition was visited by crowds, for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, constructed and worked upon a scale as yet unapproached in the South of England, was an object of universal interest. "Railways", said one of the critics of the pictures, "bid fair soon to become as numerous as canals." At this time pictures intended for exhibition in the Midlands and the North, or in Scotland, were usually conveyed from London by water. In an advertisement for the Liverpool autumn exhibition, published in the *Morning Post* of July 19th, artists are requested to send their pictures from London, through Messrs Pickford, by canal and from other places by the most convenient water conveyance. To and from Scotland they travelled at this time by sea, and in the following advertisement for a Glasgow exhibition, published in the *Literary Gazette* of June 14th, it is announced that pictures will be received for despatch at a well-known Thames-side wharf:

TO ARTISTS. The Glasgow Dilettanti's Society's Seventh Annual Exhibition of the Works of Living Artists will open on the first of August next.

Works of art sent to this exhibition from London and its vicinity may be sent to Messrs S. Reynolds and Co., Dundee Wharf, London, before the 20th of July.

The carrying of Pictures to and from Glasgow will be paid by the Society.

Walter Buchanan, Secretary.

No Royal Academicians were elected this year, and only one Associate, Frederick Richard Lee, the landscape painter, whose work was popular at this time, and, in the opinion of some, superior to that of Constable. The critic of the *Spectator*, when writing in the spring about the landscapes at the British Institution, declared that Constable's "parsley and butter pictures" were intolerable to the eye after the sober truth of Lee. The popularity of Lee may be judged by the figures of the voting at his election, in which he had eighteen supporters against two

for Simpson the portrait painter. Linnell, who was also a candidate, did not receive a single vote.

The election was in November, and in the same month the Minutes of the Royal Academy record the receipt from Canada of a catalogue of the first exhibition of pictures held at Toronto, sent to Sir Martin Archer Shee by the President of the exhibition, Mr Bonnycastle. This was the second communication received by the Academy from a body of transatlantic artists. The first was in 1831, when Colonel Childs of the Philadelphia Academy of Arts wrote on behalf of his Society for a copy of the laws of the Royal Academy, which was sent to him.

Colonel Childs, who made this application, was a lithographer who carried on business in Philadelphia in partnership with Henry Inman, the well-known American portrait painter. It was through Childs, as I stated in Chapter IX, that Benjamin West's immense painting, *Death on the Pale Horse*, was acquired for its collection by the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts.

## CHAPTER XV

1835

PRINCE HOARE, the artist and dramatist, who had been Honorary Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Royal Academy since 1799, died on December 22nd, 1834, and early in the New Year the Council of the Royal Academy met to consider a letter from his executor, Mr J. Salvador. The executor stated that Prince Hoare had bequeathed to the Royal Academy many engravings and books, and two pictures by artists unnamed, one representing the sleeping Venus, the other a female coming from the bath. Also a study by Raphael of a draped figure (the drapery of Cardinal Bembo in *The School of Athens*) and one of two portraits in crayon of Prince Hoare's father, William Hoare, R.A., which Howard, the Secretary of the Royal Academy, was desired to select. Mr Salvador added that the testator said in his will: "I desire that my Cartoon painted by Raphael, representing the *Murder of the Innocents*, be offered by my executor to the President and Council of the Royal Academy for sale at the price of £2000". The Council accepted the other property, but declined the cartoon on the ground that the Academy could not afford to purchase it.

The so-called cartoon, which is really a painting, had belonged to William Hoare, who, when a young man, bought it for £26 at a sale at Westminster. William Hoare had no doubt as to the authenticity of his purchase, and visitors to Bath, where he lived, esteemed it a privilege to be allowed to call at his house and view so rare a work. The Raphael, or supposed Raphael, after its rejection by the Academy, was presented to the Foundling Hospital, whose Governors lent it to the National Gallery, where it remained for many years, and was repaired and put in order generally. It is, perhaps, identical with "the celebrated

cartoon of *The Murder of the Innocents*, by Raphael" which on February 11th, 1724, realized 170 guineas at the Widow Motteux's sale in Leadenhall Street. Since the removal of the Foundling Hospital from London the cartoon has been on view at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Like those already at the museum it is painted, not on one sheet but upon a number of square pieces of paper joined together, and at the time when Prince Hoare's executor was offering it to the Royal Academy, Foster the auctioneer was advertising two other cartoons, "presumed by Raphael", drawn upon similar grounds. These cartoons, each eighteen feet by eleven, were described as duplicates of two then at Hampton Court, the *St Peter healing the Sick* and *Elymas the Sorcerer struck blind*. It was stated that Sir Joshua Reynolds bought them in Italy and brought them home with him, and that at his death they passed into the hands of his assistant, Marchi, by the gift of the Marchioness of Thomond, Sir Joshua's heiress. At this time the cartoons were on separate square sheets and at the sale of Marchi's effects they were described as a parcel of drawings. Their purchaser, Mr R. Brown, saw their value and had them mounted on canvases, and at the sale at Foster's the *St Peter* realized £215 and the *Elymas*, £150.

The vacancies among the Academicians caused by the deaths of Philip Reinagle and Stothard were filled at an election held on February 10th. Clarkson Stanfield, the marine painter, who had been an Associate only three years, succeeded to the place of Reinagle. He was elected by twelve votes against eleven given to William Allan. Allan was successful in the second election, defeating Deering, the architect, by eighteen votes to five. As Allan lived in Edinburgh he requested that the President should sign the roll of Academicians for him, as in the case of Raeburn, and this was allowed.

Clarkson Stanfield was one of the last members elected before the Royal Academy abandoned its old quarters at Somerset House, and before the discontinuance of those enjoyable "varnishing days", of which so many stories have been told concerning

Turner and others. While the Royal Academy was at Somerset House each member was allowed to bring an attendant with him, to clean his palette, wash his brushes, etc., and Leslie sometimes allowed his son Robert to act in this capacity. Robert Leslie, himself afterwards an artist, described some of these early varnishing days in an article published many years ago in *Temple Bar*, and recalled among those he saw at work there, Stanfield, Turner, and that interesting relic of the eighteenth century the octogenarian Sir William Beechey. That once fashionable Court painter's costume for the varnishing days was "a blue tail-coat with gilt buttons over a pale yellow or fawn-coloured waistcoat, large shirt frills, knee-breeches and silk stockings".

Leslie says that Stanfield was a model of method and technique, his materials always of the best, and his brushes and equipment in perfect order. Stanfield's son, who looked after his father's tools, was sometimes present in later years on the varnishing days, and from him Leslie says he learned how to clean brushes. One important condition was that warm water should never be used.

Turner's practice was in singular contrast with that of Stanfield. Leslie could not remember seeing him with a palette on his thumb; his colours were usually taken from small gallipots or old teacups, which stood on a stool beside him when he was at work. Turner's pictures when first hung upon the walls were almost devoid of colour and detail, and, says Leslie, "upon these ghostlike effects as they hung in his massive old tarnished frames, Turner worked, standing from six in the morning until dark and dividing his time among them as inclination led him, during the six varnishing days which were then allowed to the Royal Academicians".

Another account of Turner's methods at this time is given by the artist, E. V. Rippingille, who watched him when painting his picture, *The Burning of the House of Lords and Commons*, which was exhibited at the British Institution in February, the month of Stanfield's election to an Academicianship. The great fire

depicted, which destroyed the Houses of Parliament and thrilled all London, had occurred on the 16th of the previous October. It broke out early in the evening, and therefore attracted immense crowds of spectators, in the control of which the military were called out to assist the police. Westminster Hall was for a time in danger, but was saved by a fortunate change in the wind. A correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* who gives a vivid account of the great conflagration, witnessed it from a point of vantage on the opposite bank, at Lambeth, from whence he could hear the ceaseless tolling of the bell of St Margaret's Church, "the shouting of the firemen, the crash of falling timbers, the drums of the Foot Guards beating to arms, and the clarions of the Horse wailing through the air". At half-past nine the roof of the House of Lords fell in, and, says the writer, "bright blue coruscations, as of electric fire, played in the great volume of flames, and so struck were the bystanders with the grandeur of the sight at this moment that they involuntarily (and from no bad feeling) clapped their hands as though they had been present at the closing scene of some dramatic spectacle".

This was Turner's subject, for he painted the fire as seen from the Surrey shore of the Thames. Apparently he painted it almost from memory, as Ripplingille, when describing what he saw on the varnishing day at the British Institution, makes no mention of the use of any sketches or studies. Ripplingille says:

Turner was there and at work on his picture, before I arrived. Indeed it was necessary for him to make the best of his time, as the picture when sent in was a mere dab of several colours and "without form, and void" like chaos before the creation. Etty was working by his side at one of his pictures and every now and then a word and a quiet laugh passed between the two painters. Etty stepped back occasionally to look at the effect of his work, sometimes speaking to some one near him—but not so Turner. For the three hours I was there—and I understood it had been the same since he began in the morning—he never ceased to work, or even once looked or turned from the wall on which his picture hung. All the lookers-on were amused by the figure Turner exhibited in himself and the process he was pursuing with his picture. A small box of colours, a few very small brushes, and a vial or two, were at

his feet, very inconveniently placed; but his short figure enabled him to reach what he wanted very readily.

In one part of the mysterious proceedings, Turner, who worked almost entirely with his palette knife, was observed to be rolling and spreading a lump of half-transparent stuff, the size of a finger in length and thickness, over his picture. As Callcott was looking on I ventured to say to him, "What is that he is plastering his picture with?" to which inquiry it was replied, "I should be sorry to be the man to ask him". All who heard the reply appeared to echo the remark in their looks and to satisfy themselves as well as they could, without making the venture that by general consent appeared to be a dangerous experiment. Presently the work was finished. Turner gathered his tools together, put them into and shut up the box, and then, with his face still turned to the wall and at the same distance from it, went sidling off without speaking a word to anybody.

Other artists, of course, attempted representations of the burning of the Houses of Parliament, and Constable, who saw the fire from Westminster Bridge, made a rough sketch of the effect in pen and ink and gave it to his friend, C. R. Leslie, who treasured it to the end of his life. There were pictures of the scene at the British Institution besides that by Turner, but his overshadowed them all. "Turner's picture", said the *Spectator*, "transcends its neighbours as the sun eclipses the moon and stars. The showers of sparks falling, the crowds on the river, the bridge and the shore; and the breadth and colour of the river, are imitated to the reality." The *Morning Post* remarked of the effort of one of his rivals, J. J. Chalon's picture of the same subject (273), "Mr Chalon may be, and doubtless is, a faithful copyist of a street scene, but Mr Turner is a poet in his art and transfers to canvas the workings of an element". The *Literary Gazette* mentions the Turner in its list of pictures sold at the British Institution, as bought by Mr C. Hall.

An interesting event of the spring of 1835 was the presentation of a testimonial to Sir John Soane, R.A., in recognition of his professional ability, and of his liberality in arranging for the preservation of his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields and its valuable contents for the benefit of the public. The architects who planned the testimonial engaged Wyon to design a medal bearing

on the obverse a portrait of Sir John, from the bust by Chantrey; and on the reverse, a reproduction of one of his architectural designs. The cost of the medal and of the entertainment held in honour of the veteran architect were defrayed by a public subscription, to which the Governors of the Bank of England contributed a hundred guineas. The presentation was made on March 24th, at Sir John's house, which was thrown open from twelve to four to the subscribers and their friends, who met again in the evening at the Freemasons' Tavern, where the grand hall had been adorned for the occasion by the architects on the committee:

The walls were hung round with scarlet cloth upon which were suspended numerous drawings of the works of Sir John Soane. In front were arranged scagliola pedestals, with busts of celebrated British and foreign architects. At the top of the room the bust of Sir John Soane was placed upon a pedestal from which was suspended a case containing the three medals which had been presented to him in the morning. At the base of this pedestal were arranged architectural fragments interspersed with large chaplets of evergreens, and festoons suspended from gilt candelabra. The company assembled about nine o'clock; and a more elegant or lively sight was never witnessed in this hall. The ladies were gaily dressed; and the architects wore the academical medals which had been bestowed upon them either in this country or abroad. Weipart's full band was arranged in the gallery; and after the company had promenaded for some time, quadrille parties were formed and the dancing was kept up with spirit for some hours.

Sir John Soane's collection was one of those seen by Waagen, the Director of the Royal Gallery at Berlin, when in May of this year he visited London for the first time to collect information for his *Works of Art and Artists in England*, published in 1838. This book, little read now, is not to be compared as a work of reference with the same author's well-known *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, of 1854, but it is more interesting in its personal descriptions of life in England and of travelling from one country house to another in the pre-railway period. Waagen, though he admired some of Soane's pictures, declared that his oddly arranged, crowded house, left upon his mind the unpleasant impression of a feverish dream. But he praised him for allowing

free access to his house to all, several times a week, and thus giving students and others opportunities of seeing pictures in addition to those afforded by the small and inconveniently arranged National Gallery, then housed for the time being at No. 105 Pall Mall. Of the wretched accommodation there, he says: "The four rooms have a dirty appearance; and with great depth so little light that most of the pictures are but imperfectly seen. They are hung without any arrangement, as chance has decided".

Waagen was soon to discover that though England by 1835 had travelled so far in the right direction as to have formed a national collection of pictures of a kind, the galleries of some of the great houses maintained their old reputation for inaccessibility, or could only be seen in uncomfortable conditions.

He was not the ordinary sightseer; for him it was necessary to study the pictures undisturbed, and this was sometimes impossible although he was armed as a rule with excellent introductions. As a particular favour he obtained, through the Lord Chamberlain, Earl Howe, admission to Northumberland House, and was anxious afterwards to see the pictures at the Brentford home of the Percys, Syon House. "But", he says, "I was given to understand that this was as much out of the question as to pay a visit to the moon." He had trouble at Longford, where at first he met with a flat refusal. He was admitted at last, by means of a letter to Lady Radnor, but was chased through the rooms so quickly that he could take no notes and was unable to examine properly the picture he was most anxious to see—that famous Holbein, *The Ambassadors*, now in the National Gallery. To Woburn Abbey he went with a letter to the housekeeper, who ruled the establishment in the absence of her master, the Duke of Bedford, but the introduction did not avail him much:

The housekeeper, a very respectable-looking, corpulent woman, who in her black silk gown came rustling in much state to meet me, suffered herself to be induced by the letter to show me about the house. But this view was the most uncomfortable of all that I had had in England. With the closed

curtains and the gloomy weather a Cimmerian darkness prevailed in the rooms, which at my earnest entreaty she dispelled a little—for a few moments only—by drawing the curtains aside. But if I ventured to look very attentively at a picture she already had her hand, with very significant glances, on the door of the next apartment. In this manner the whole view was over in an hour.

However, the German expert was better received at some of the other great houses, and at Luton Hoo, the seat of Lord Bute, he met the ideal housekeeper, who allowed him to examine the collection as he pleased. "When she perceived how leisurely I proceeded, she, to my great satisfaction, fetched some work and sat down with it in every room, till I asked her to show me another." Equally considerate was the Countess of Pembroke, who was at breakfast with her daughters when Waagen arrived at Wilton. She invited him to join them, and afterwards, when she had shown him a few of the treasures, said: "Now I will leave you alone, for I know very well that nothing is more unpleasant than to be obliged to join in conversation when engaged in study". Waagen was received with charming courtesy by the Duke of Devonshire, at Chatsworth; and at Blenheim, the Duke of Marlborough allowed him to remain alone in the rooms as long as he pleased, "and begged that I would not allow his coming and going to interrupt me". But his happiest time was during a visit to Panshanger, where he went to see the collection of Lord Cowper—the collection that contained the Raphael for which Sir Joseph Duveen paid £150,000 to Lady Desborough. It was midsummer when he went to the beautiful Hertfordshire seat, with a letter from Lady Cowper which assured him free access everywhere and a respectful reception from the servants in charge of the house. Waagen says of Panshanger:

I passed here six happy hours in quiet solitude. The solemn silence was interrupted only by the humming of innumerable bees which fluttered round the flowering plants which, in the greatest luxuriance, adorn the windows. It is only when so left to oneself that, by degrees, penetrating into the spirit of works of art, one can discover all their peculiar beauties. But when, as often happens in England, and as I shall doubtless again experience, an impatient

housekeeper rattles with her keys, one cannot be in the proper frame of mind but must look at everything superficially and with internal vexation.

Waagen visited the exhibition at the Royal Academy and was far from impressed by it on the whole. But Landseer delighted him, and he was much pleased with the pictures by Wilkie, Eastlake and Uwins, and with the landscapes of Callcott and Stanfield. He found much to criticize in Turner. "I made a point", he said, "of looking for the landscapes of the favourite painter, Turner, who is known throughout Europe by his numerous, often very clever, compositions for annuals and other books, where they appear in beautiful steel engravings. But I could scarcely trust my eyes when, in a view of Ehrenbreitstein, and another of the burning of the two Houses of Parliament, I found such a looseness, such a total want of truth as I had never before met with. He has here succeeded in combining a crude, painted medley with a general foggy appearance."

Turner's picture, *The Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons* (294), was a second rendering of the subject illustrated by him at the British Institution early in the spring. Of the version at the Academy little was said by the critics of the exhibition, but the other picture condemned by Waagen, the *Ehrenbreitstein* (74), was admired, and was described by *The Times* as "for force of colour and admirable harmony of tone not to be equalled by any living painter". Turner's *Keelmen heaving in coals by night* (24), and the beautiful little *Line-fishing off Hastings* (234), now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, appear to have been liked by all. *The Times*, in the notice in which Turner was praised, rebuked the Academicians for their bad treatment of prominent outsiders. On the other hand, the *Morning Herald* stated that Callcott and Phillips, who with A. E. Chalon formed the Hanging Committee, withdrew some of their pictures to make room for those of non-members. And that further efforts were made to help the outsiders this year is evident from an entry in the Academy Minutes of April 13th, when the hanging was in progress. It stated that in consequence of the number of pictures to be accommodated Sir William Beechey had been

asked to withdraw two of his portraits, and that other members had been obliged to make similar sacrifices. Landseer—one of the most popular painters of the year—showed but three works. Only one was a subject picture, *A Scene in the Grampians—the Drover's departure* (167), and this it was difficult to see, for there was always a crowd in front of it. This picture, like the Turner mentioned above, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The charges against Etty of impropriety in his pictures, made in 1828 and 1830, were renewed, and more strongly, this year. In the case of his *Wood Nymphs Sleeping* (325), the *Literary Gazette*, while praising the execution and colour, declared that its exceeding indelicacy made it quite unfit for public exhibition. Two works of greater importance, *Venus and her Satellites* (94), and *Phaedria and Cymochles on the Idle Lake* (310), were the subjects of such violent attacks that it is surprising that the Academy did not notice them officially or mention them in the Minutes. *The Times* said of the two pictures:

No. 94. *Venus and her Satellites*. W. Etty. This painter has fallen into an egregious error. He mistakes the use of nudity in painting and presents in the most gross and literal manner the unhappy models of the Royal Academy for the exquisite idealities in which Titian and other masters who have chosen similar subjects, revelled. In this picture, and in another, No. 310, *Phaedria and Cymochles on the Idle Lake*, Mr Etty has permitted many unpardonable abominations. The latter is a most disgusting thing, and we wonder that in these times the people who have the direction of this exhibition venture to permit such pictures to be hung. *Phaedria* is the true representative of one of the Nymphs of Drury Lane, and *Cymochles* looks like an unwashed coal-porter. Such pictures are as shocking to good taste as they are offensive to common decency; they are only fit for the contemplation of very old or very young gentlemen, and ought to be reserved for the particular delectation of those classes of persons.

The critic of the *Observer* was equally outspoken. He said of the pictures, on May 10th:

*Venus and her Satellites* (94). W. Etty, R.A. We must indeed be more serious with this gentleman than is our wont, for the Society for the Suppression of Vice is not to be excused for its prosecutions in cases of obscene publications, and the Lord Mayor himself deserves at once to be sent to the treadmill

for imprisoning a little Italian boy for hawking about the streets a naked cupid, if such lascivious scenes are allowed to be exhibited at the Royal Academy with impunity. A brothel on fire, which had driven all the Paphian nymphs out from their beds into the courtyard would be a modest exhibition compared to this, for they would at least exhibit *en chemise*. Several ladies we know were deterred from going into the corner of the room to see Leslie's, Webster's and other pictures of merit there, to avoid the offence and disgrace Mr Etty has conferred on that quarter. No. 325, *Wood Nymphs Sleeping*, is in some measure still worse, and *Phaedria*, No. 310, partakes of the same character.

Etty was fortunate enough to sell the *Venus and her Satellites* from the exhibition. The price paid was three hundred guineas, and the purchaser a Shropshire clergyman, the Rev. E. P. Owen. Etty, with whom the picture was a favourite, said in a letter to the purchaser that he was "truly happy that his dear Venus has got into hands that will appreciate her". Mr Owen certainly did appreciate the *Venus and her Satellites*, and later, when Etty's work rose in value, could not be tempted to part with it, although he had an offer of sixteen hundred guineas for the picture. After the close of the exhibition Etty stayed for some time in Shropshire with Mr Owen, and while there painted a portrait of Archdeacon Bather for the local clergy.

The writer in the *Observer* of the paragraph condemning Etty's picture was Constable's enemy, who, dismissed from the *Morning Chronicle* for his comments on Harriet Martineau, was still writing for the Sunday paper. His notice of the Academy exhibition published on May 10th contained a long criticism of Constable's only contribution, *The Valley Farm*; a criticism that lacked his earlier touches of humour, and though evidently intended to be hostile was merely dull and commonplace. But Constable found this year a new adversary in the shape of the Rev. John Eagles ("The Sketcher"), that critic of *Blackwood's Magazine* abhorred by Ruskin. Eagles said of Constable's picture in his review of the Academy:

No. 145. *The Valley Farm*. John Constable, R.A. There is nothing here to designate a valley or a farm, but something like a cow standing in some ditch-water. It is the poorest in composition, beggarly in parts, miserably

painted, and without the least truth of colour—and so odd that it would appear to have been powdered over with the dredging box, or to have been under an accidental shower of white lead—which I find on enquiry is meant to represent the sparkling of dew. The sparkling of dew! Did ever Mr Constable see anything like this in nature? If he has, he has seen what no one else ever pretended to have seen. Such conceited imbecility is distressing, and being so large, it is but magnified folly.

This insolent notice must have approached libel in its concluding sentence, and someone—perhaps Constable himself—appears to have remarked upon it to the publishers of *Blackwood's Magazine*, as the following apology by the critic appeared in the October number:

It has been pointed out to me that in my critique of Mr Constable's picture I used expressions that are too strong, and I regret having used them because they may be misconstrued. I know not Mr Constable even by sight and have seen few of his pictures. I have seen some prints from his works which certainly gave me a high opinion of his ability, and "conceit" or "imbecility" are the last words I should apply when speaking of them. I was disappointed in his picture of *The Valley Farm* as in no way coming up to the expectation that those works of his which I *had* seen had raised in me.

*The Valley Farm* had been purchased from Constable by Mr Vernon before it was sent to the Academy, and was among the pictures presented by him to the National Gallery in 1847. Constable worked upon it for some months after it came back from the Academy and believed that he improved it considerably before it passed into Mr Vernon's possession.

The exhibition at the Royal Academy contained this year no fewer than four portraits of the Duke of Wellington, who now, and almost to the end of his life, was pursued by artists begging for sittings. The four portraits in question were by Wilkie, Pickersgill, Andrew Morton, and J. Towne—the last a statue in marble. All were executed at sittings given by the Duke at his two country houses, for his innumerable engagements prevented him from giving any time to artists when he was in London. Wilkie's portrait (113) and the one exhibited by him in 1834 were both painted at Strathfieldsaye, where, he says

that the Duke was very gracious and did everything to assist him. He was obliging also to Morton, whose portrait of this year was painted for the Royal Naval Club. Morton was given sittings both at Strathfieldsaye and at Walmer Castle. At the Castle the Duke kept him for three weeks painting his figure and dress, "being then", said Morton, "as particular about his epaulettes as he had before been indifferent about ribbons and orders".

A coat and other articles of dress were lent to Morton to take with him to London, and Anderdon, who knew the artist, saw them at his studio when he was at work on the portrait. Anderdon, who was allowed to put the coat on, says: "It proved the muscular form of the hero, as I was lost in the broad chest and shoulders. I could have put both hands into one of the military gloves".

The following letter written by the Duke of Wellington shows that his position with regard to artists and sittings remained unchanged ten years after Morton painted his portrait. The letter, addressed to Edward Everett, who in 1845 was the United States Minister in London, is a reply to a request that the Duke would allow the American artist, Henry Inman, to paint his portrait:

London, 22 *February*, 1845.

My dear Sir

I have to apologize for having omitted to return an answer immediately to your note of the 18th, received two days ago.

I am much flattered by the desire of Mr Inman that I should sit to him for a picture. But I am much concerned to add that during the Session of Parliament, and while the Court is in town, it is impossible for me to find time which I can devote to him. I am bankrupt in respect to portraits and busts. I am certain there are not less than a dozen artists in London with commissions to paint portraits or to model busts of me. But I cannot find time to give any one a sitting. I have not been able to give a sitting in London for many years. I receive the artists at my houses in the country, either at Strathfieldsaye or Walmer Castle, and give them sittings at their leisure. Wilkie, Chantrey, Campbell, Mr Lucas, Mr Lister and others, the principal artists, have come down and passed their three or four days at my house, and I really can find no other time to give them.

In the last autumn, H.M. the Queen desired me to sit for my portrait for the King of the French, and I sat at Windsor Castle, instead of going out shooting one day and hunting another with his Royal Highness Prince Albert.

I do everything in my power to have time at my disposition! I never dine in company on the days on which the House of Parliament of which I am a member sits for the decision of business. Nor go out in the evening. I rise early and go to bed late. But still my whole time is occupied, and it is absolutely impossible to name an hour at which I could receive Mr Inman and sit to him for a picture.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully

Wellington.

E. Everett, Esq., 46 Grosvenor Place.

The Duke sent Inman a courteous invitation to visit him at Strathfieldsaye, which, unfortunately, the artist was not able to accept.

Just before the close of the Academy exhibition the newspapers published reports of a trial of interest to artists and collectors, *Pennell v. Woodburn*, which concerned the authenticity of a picture, said to be by Claude. Pennell, a picture-dealer of Piccadilly, bought from another dealer, Woodburn, for £80, a picture sold as a Claude, and Pennell sold it again to a collector named Jadis. The collector, who for some reason became suspicious of his acquisition, brought an action against Pennell on the ground that the picture was not a Claude, and recovered the purchase money with costs.

Pennell now sued Woodburn for the £80 he paid for the picture, and for £294, the cost of the action successfully brought against him by Jadis, and expert evidence concerning the authenticity of the alleged Claude was given in support of both the parties. Pennell's witnesses included W. Y. Ottley, then in charge of the prints and drawings at the British Museum; James Lonsdale, the portrait painter; Bentley, the picture-dealer of Sloane Street; and Haydon, who gave his evidence with characteristic vehemence. Haydon, who described himself as an historical painter, and said that he had never been rich enough

to possess a Claude himself, declared that the landscape in dispute must have been the effort of some apprentice of a picture-dealer. "The clouds", he said, "had no nature about them, and the trees were nothing more or less than a mere botanical preparation. Trees by Claude always appeared so natural and had so much reality about them that one might suppose a bird might fly into them. The picture was a foul imposition."

For the defendant several artists gave evidence in favour of the picture, the first of whom was Linnell, the landscape painter. In his opinion the picture was a Claude, although an inferior specimen. It had evidently undergone considerable reparation, but still was a Claude—perhaps one of his early productions. Thomas Uwins, A.R.A. (afterwards Keeper of the National Gallery) thought there could be no doubt of the picture's authenticity; and as to its condition said that there were hardly any works by the Old Masters that had not undergone some reparation. The opinion of Constable, described as "an amateur painter" in the lengthy *Morning Post* report, was more favourable than that of any of the other witnesses. He agreed with Linnell and Uwins that the picture had been repaired and painted upon, but he was convinced that it had originally come from the easel of the great master of landscape painting. His opinion was formed from the general effect rather than from any particular part, and he considered it upon the whole a felicitous effort of Claude's genius.

Nevertheless the jury found that the picture was not by Claude, and gave a verdict for Pennell for £80 and costs. Nothing is said in the reports concerning the claim for £294.

A few days before the trial about the Claude, Constable delivered a lecture on landscape painting, at Hampstead. No report of this lecture has been preserved, but an abstract of it found among Constable's papers after his death is printed in Leslie's biography. It was a success, and he was invited to repeat it for the benefit of a provincial audience. The invitation came from his friend, Mr Leader Williams (father of the late B. W. Leader, R.A.), who lived at Worcester, and in that city, at

the Athenaeum, Constable gave three lectures. They were thus advertised in the *Worcester Herald* of October 2nd:

THE ATHENAEUM  
FOREGATE STREET, WORCESTER  
LECTURES UPON LANDSCAPE PAINTING  
BY JOHN CONSTABLE, R.A.

The Committee of the Worcestershire Institution for promoting Literature, Science and the Fine Arts, begs to inform the public that Mr Constable will deliver a course of three lectures upon the highly interesting art of Landscape Painting, on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, the 6th, 8th, and 9th of October, at 12 o'clock, in which will be illustrated its rise, progress, establishment and perfection, till the time of its almost total extinction in the Continental Schools, and the revival and continuation of the art in England.

On October 10th the *Worcester Herald* published the following summary of the addresses:

Three lectures on Landscape Painting have this week been delivered at the Athenaeum by Mr Constable, R.A., to a highly respectable auditory, and they excited, as may be imagined, considerable interest. The very feeling and beautiful illustrations of the parentage and birth of the art, and its complete isolation from the great mass of historic art with which it has hitherto been involved, called forth repeated marks of satisfaction and delight. Mr Constable exhibited a table (which displayed great research) of the earliest German masters, tracing their efforts down to the great work of the Campo Santo, and then to Albert Dürer, whose pupils, having been engaged by Titian, enabled him by the combination of sublimity, pathos and grandeur to complete the stupendous work of the *Peter Martyr*, and the illustration of the effect which the splendid landscape of that work possesses in solemnizing and calming the mind while gazing upon a scene of bloodshed, was given with much taste.

This paragraph was all the space the Editor thought fit to devote to Constable's three lectures, although he had given no fewer than twelve long notices, signed "Lorenzo", criticizing a collection of modern pictures then on view in the city. These notices were described as "a drivelling parcel of sad stuff" by Constable, who knew the author. "Lorenzo" was William Carey, the picture-dealer and art critic.

Another local journal, the *Worcester Guardian*, published a

longer summary of the first two lectures, in which, however, the subjects of both were confused. No paper, unfortunately, reported Constable's autobiographical introduction to the lectures, which may have been extremely interesting. The only record of it is a sentence in a sympathetic note on Constable, published in the *Worcester Guardian* a week after his death: "The deceased artist's own ingenious account of his origin, and early occupation as a miller, will be in the recollection of our readers who attended his lectures here". Constable's idea of delivering these lectures, of expressing himself publicly upon the subject he had most at heart, was no new thing. "I have long been possessed", he declared, in a letter to Wilkie, "of feeling a duty on my part to *tell* the world there is such a thing as Landscape existing with Art—as I have in great measure failed to *show* the world that it is possible to accomplish it".

A sketch by Sir Joshua Reynolds for an important picture planned by him but never carried out was the subject of an interesting announcement made by the *Morning Post* in June:

His Majesty, being informed by Sir Hilgrove Turner, when he was in town last week, that the Messrs Woodburn of St Martin's Lane were in possession of an original sketch, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds and intended for a picture on a large scale, representing the marriage of George the Third and Queen Charlotte, in which more than one hundred portraits are introduced; expressed a wish to see the sketch, which was taken to St James's Palace and was instantly purchased by the King for a hundred guineas.

Graves and Cronin in their list of works by Sir Joshua refer to this sketch as in the Royal collection at Windsor, but their story of its acquisition does not agree with that related above. The sketch had been exhibited at the British Institution in 1833 by Mrs Woodburn, and from her, according to Graves and Cronin, it was purchased by Messrs Henry Graves and Co., who afterwards sold it to Queen Victoria.

Sir Robert Peel bought this year at auction two of the pictures in the collection formed by him and now in the National Gallery. One was Sir Joshua's *Robinetta* (892), which he bought at Phillip's auction rooms for £315, at the sale of a collection of

pictures belonging to Mr H. Gritten of Trafalgar Square. The second picture was the Ruysdael, *A Waterfall*, No. 855. This was bought for six hundred and ninety guineas at the sale of Lord Charles Townshend's collection at Christie's, in April, and according to the *Observer*, Sir Robert attended the auction and bid for the picture himself. A better known landscape by a Dutch artist was lent by Sir Robert to the exhibition at the British Institution, where it was much admired,—the Hobbema (*The Avenue, Middelharnis*), now in the National Gallery.

In the annals of miniature painting there is no record of the effort made this year by its practitioners to obtain a more definite connection with the Royal Academy than they had hitherto enjoyed. There were no societies of miniature painters in 1835, and the Academy exhibition was the only one to which unattached miniaturists could contribute. The watercolour societies received only the works of members, and portraits were not accepted at the British Institution. In view of this, and of the fact that their contributions formed collectively a not unimportant feature of the annual exhibitions, a group of the artists concerned ventured in the summer to approach the Council with a proposal. It was suggested that the Academy should elect: "a certain number of Associate Miniature Painters, of whom it may be hoped that *some one* will always be found not unworthy of being elected an Academician". It was stated that such an arrangement would stimulate the miniature painters to greater exertions, and that the signatories therefore "anxiously and respectfully submit this appeal to the candour and liberality of the Royal Academy".

The signatories to the petition were W. J. Newton, Secretary; W. Barclay, W. Booth, F. Cruikshank, Henry Collen, Cornelius Durham, Samuel Lover, W. Patten, J. W. Slater, A. Robertson, W. C. Ross, S. J. Rochard, A. Tidey, and G. R. Ward. The Council's reply was to the effect that the proposed step was unnecessary, as miniature painters were already eligible for membership of the Academy. There was more correspondence, but nothing came of it except a small amendment of the conditions

for exhibiting. It was agreed that for the future miniature painters should be permitted to show two or more works in a single frame. Two of the artists whose names are in the above list, W. C. Ross and F. Cruikshank, were among the candidates for Associateship at the election held in November, but neither obtained any support. Ross, however, was elected in 1838, and was made an Academician in 1843.

The successful candidates at the November election were Maclise, then at the commencement of a career of extraordinary, but temporary, success; and Solomon Hart, afterwards for many years the Librarian of the Royal Academy. Maclise was elected by nineteen votes to four and Hart by sixteen to seven. John Simpson, the portrait painter, was second in each contest. At the election of an Associate-Engraver, which followed that of the painters, Samuel Cousins defeated David Lucas by eighteen votes to four.

## CHAPTER XVI

1836

IN January, Hilton, the Keeper of the Royal Academy, informed the Council that two of the pictures in the Diploma Gallery were missing, *Tuning*, by Alfred E. Chalon, and *The Tale of Interest*, by George Jones. They had been stolen, no one knew when or how; and they were not recovered, as Cosway's diploma picture, *Venus and Cupid*, was, after it had been stolen in 1810. No work, therefore, represents Chalon to-day in the Diploma Gallery. The *Malines*, by Jones, was bequeathed to the Academy in 1874, by the artist's widow, to take the place of the missing diploma picture. At this time thefts of miniatures from the summer exhibition were not uncommon, although few are recorded in the Minutes. "Scarcely a year passes in which one is not stolen", said the President, Sir Martin Archer Shee, in a letter to the Home Secretary, in which he set forth the objections to admitting the public to the exhibition free of charge.

There was to be no free admission to the Academy exhibition in 1836 or in any subsequent year, and the nation's pictures, the only ones in London that could be seen for nothing except those in Sir John Soane's gallery, were still huddled together in the rooms at No. 105 Pall Mall. The position of the so-called National Gallery appears to have been but little known even in the locality in which it was situated. There is proof of this in a note by Franz Grillparzer, a German visitor to London, some extracts from whose diary were published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in July, 1925. Writing on May 30th, 1836, Grillparzer says:

Went to see a few art exhibitions. First to the National Gallery, Pall Mall, which I had difficulty in finding at first, so unknown was it to every body I asked. At last, at an engraver's shop I got the right direction. It is only

temporarily housed in the present premises and the building therefore is nothing in particular. I did not much care for the collection.

Grillparzer missed seeing an interesting work that had been on view in the National Gallery, but was removed just before the date of his visit—Gainsborough's full-length of Dr Schomberg. This portrait was presented to the Gallery by one of three members of the Schomberg family by whom it had been inherited jointly, but was afterwards returned to the donor because his title was disputed by the other heirs. Its value was then small, perhaps fifty pounds, or less, but when it was acquired for the Gallery by purchase in 1862 it cost the Trustees a thousand pounds. During the short time the portrait was on view in 1836 it was seen by a correspondent of the *Spectator*, who visited the Gallery in January. He says of Dr Schomberg's portrait:

A more living transcript of individual character was never put on canvas: it is identity, as you look, it almost seems to breathe. The landscape background is roughly scrubbed in, in Gainsborough's loosest manner, and the costume though anything but slovenly painted, is not remarkable for finish or richness. It is the face wherein all the refinement of the painter's skill is exercised, with that happy perfection that makes one lose sight of the picture in the realization. This portrait hangs under a skylight just before you enter the room. It is the only picture of the whole collection that is seen under a top-light and to this circumstance is to be attributed in a degree the striking effect. We may judge from this how the other pictures will gain when they are exhibited under a light from above, as will be the case in the new Gallery. At present many are scarcely visible.

This praise of the Schomberg full-length is remarkable, for in 1836 Gainsborough's reputation as a portrait painter was at a low ebb. Sir Martin Archer Shee giving evidence about the English School before the Select Committee on Arts and Principles of Design, said, "I have no hesitation in stating that, in my opinion, there are greater artists than Gainsborough now living". And less than two years earlier, as I have shown, no bid could be obtained in the auction room for the now famous *Morning Walk*.

It is remarkable, too, that the critic of *Blackwood's Magazine*,

who also saw the Schomberg portrait at the National Gallery, was so much impressed by it that he speaks in the same breath of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua. In noticing the three Gainsboroughs then in the National Gallery he mentions first the landscapes, *The Market Cart* and *The Watering-Place*. Gainsborough's landscapes had never lost their popularity, and the Directors of the British Institution paid one thousand and fifty guineas for *The Market Cart*—a record price until then for an English landscape sold by auction. *The Watering-Place* (109) was the gift of Lord Farnborough, and is the picture which Walpole, when he saw it at the Royal Academy in 1777, described as “by far the finest landscape ever painted in England, and equal to the great masters”. The critic of *Blackwood's Magazine* refers scornfully to *The Watering-Place* as “a dingy ditch with stained cattle that do well to endeavour to wash themselves, though they cannot get up to their knees in the fluid, and there they stand, alike fearful to drink or to lie down in the unpromising liquid”. He then comments on the other Gainsboroughs, beginning with *The Market Cart*:

We believe the British Institution gave one thousand pounds for this rubbish, of which Gainsborough, could he have recovered the sense and taste that he had in his earlier time, would have been, and perhaps was, thoroughly ashamed. You could scarcely make so bad a choice among modern painters, although they are poor enough in landscape, as not to have had a better—far better—picture for twenty pounds. . . . But the portrait of Ralph Schomberg, Esq., presented by the family, is a lucky present and redeems poor Gainsborough's fame. Gainsborough's forte was portrait, in that he stands almost unrivalled among those of his day, and in that walk he is original. He is more natural than Sir Joshua.

It is curious that this writer, who deserves credit for recognizing the quality of Gainsborough's portraits when few admired them, could see no merit in the landscapes of the same painter. For this want of appreciation, and for venturing to say in a notice of an exhibition of the Royal Academy that Lee's landscapes were superior in several respects to those of Gainsborough, he was some years afterwards castigated by Ruskin,

who spoke of him as an example of "honest, hopeless, helpless imbecility". "I do not know", said Ruskin, "that even in this age of charlatanry, I could point to a more barefaced instance of imposture on the simplicity of the public than the insertion of these pieces of criticism in a respectable periodical." The *Blackwood's Magazine* critic was strongly opposed to the attempts, renewed this year by Etty and other artists, to obtain some at least of the Lawrence collection of drawings for the nation. The critic admitted that the collection contained some very fine drawings, "but", he said, "the greater part are below mediocrity, and there is much positive trash. With very few exceptions there is little that may not be surpassed every day by hundreds or more of artists"!

A disastrous fire in which many pictures were destroyed occurred in London in March, at Yates' gallery, and was witnessed by Etty, who mentions it in a letter to Mrs Bulmer, written on the 27th of the month, in which he says:

Did I not take you and Cicely to the Western Exchange, Bond Street (a Picture Gallery) where you saw a fine Paolo Veronese, a large Rubens, and other pictures? I wished them to have the Veronese at the National Gallery. Last night my Betsy and I saw from our roof, about twelve o'clock, a dreadful fire in the direction of Bond Street. I little thought it was those fine pictures. The light, sparks, and even flames were dancing over the long line of housetops. The fire began at a tailor's, and communicated to the Exchange, the whole of which, with pictures and property to the amount of £30,000 or £40,000, was soon destroyed. Two friends of mine who lived next, Hookham, with his extensive library, and Carpenter, the bookseller, escaped by a miracle. The fire attacked the latter's roof, and his valuable books and pictures were in the greatest jeopardy.

The Western Exchange, except for Yates' gallery, was a kind of fashionable bazaar, composed of about forty shops and stalls, the whole covered with a lofty timber roof, with large skylights. It had several entrances and occupied the space between the western boundary of the Burlington Arcade and the backs of about a dozen houses in Old Bond Street. The fire broke out at the house of a military tailor named Absolon, of 12 Old Bond Street, spread to the Western Exchange, which was wholly

destroyed, and thence to the Burlington Arcade, where several shops were burnt out and many more damaged. Yates, when he arrived on the scene, is said to have been like a man demented, and with good reason, if it were true, as said in the newspapers, that his stock, valued at £40,000, was insured for only £3000. The Paul Veronese admired by Etty, *St Jerome with the Virgin in Glory*, is described in a contemporary list as the companion of *The Consecration of St Nicholas* in the National Gallery. The Rubens, also seen by Etty, was the *Continence of Scipio*, a picture from the Orleans collection, about eight feet by twelve, and valued at £5000. The other destroyed canvases included several portraits by Vandyck; a Claude; a Canaletto; a *Virgin and Child* by Murillo; a little Annibale Carracci, *Æneas and Anchises*; and what is described as a remarkable portrait of a nobleman, by Sebastian del Piombo.

George Yates is forgotten now, but he was one of the foremost picture-dealers of his time. Once in the employment of William Buchanan, he was his successor in a business carried on in Oxendon Street. Some notable canvases passed through his hands, including the famous *Venus and Cupid* by Velasquez; the sketch by Titian of *The Apotheosis of Charles V*; and the little Correggio, called *La Vierge au Panier*, all of which are now in the National Gallery. However heavy his losses may have been in the fire of 1836, he appears to have recovered from them soon, for in the following spring he was established at No. 13 Old Bond Street, and was showing there the *Brazen Serpent* by Rubens, and the *Holy Family* by Murillo, both of which were bought from Mr J. B. Bulkeley Owen for the National Gallery in the summer of the same year for the inclusive sum of £7350.

Two Royal Academicians were elected this year, John Gibson, the sculptor, and Charles Robert Cockerell, the architect. Each received eighteen votes in the final ballots and in both elections Uwins was second with ten votes. Clint, who had been an Associate for fourteen years received some support in the voting but not enough to carry him to the final stage of the ballot, and a few days after the election resigned his

Associateship. In the summer, when the Select Committee on Arts and Principles of Design enquired into the affairs of the Royal Academy, Clint offered himself as a witness. He declared in his evidence that the Associates lived in a state of vassalage, and complained among other things that they could not even be sure that good places would be given to their pictures. Clint may have overstated his case, but it is certain that the Associate of 1836 lacked important privileges that are enjoyed by his present-day successors. These include the right to have their pictures hung upon the line, to serve occasionally on Hanging Committees, and, most important of all, to vote at the elections of Academicians and Associates.

The cession of the right of voting was forced upon the Academicians by the Government when the question of allotting Burlington House to the Academy was under consideration in 1865. The President, Sir Charles Eastlake, was then in Italy, and on November 23rd, Knight, the Secretary to the Academy, wrote to report progress and said that the First Commissioner of Works had informed him "that the according of the right of voting at elections to the Associates was a *sine qua non* on the part of the Government and that such proposal had received the sanction of the Queen. He desired to know the views of the Academy on that special matter". Eastlake died in Italy a few weeks later, and it was left to his successor, Sir Francis Grant, to place the Government's proposals before the Academicians. Some of them demurred. "Well," said Grant, "if we don't give the Associates the vote we shan't get Burlington House." The Associates voted for the first time in March, 1867.

Besides Clint, the artists who gave evidence before the Select Committee, against the Royal Academy, included Hurlstone, Hoffland, John Martin, and, of course, Haydon, whose name had been prominent in the spring in connection with another matter. This was the raffle, on May 9th, for his large picture, *Xenophon's first sight of the Sea*, upon which he had been working, at intervals, for several years. The raffle, of which, strangely enough, Haydon gives no account in his *Diary*, was remarkable

for the social or other distinction of its supporters. *Xenophon* was valued by the artist at eight hundred guineas, and tickets for the raffle, at ten pounds each, were sold to that amount. The subscribers included the King; the Duchess of Kent and her daughter, the young Princess Victoria; the Dukes of Bedford, Northumberland, Devonshire, Richmond and Sutherland; the Marquis of Lansdowne and the Marquis of Westminster; ten Earls; six Barons; and many well-known persons of lesser rank, including Samuel Rogers, and—last but not least—the great Goethe, “of Weimar”, as stated in the list.

Many of the subscribers were present at the raffle, which took place in the club room of the Society of Dilettanti, at the Thatched House Tavern, on the walls of which were hanging Sir Joshua's two portrait groups of some of its eminent members. The throws of the dice on which the fate of the picture turned resulted in a tie between the Duke of Bedford and Lord Mulgrave. In throwing again the Duke was the winner. The *Morning Post*, when announcing the result, said the picture was raffled for because Haydon could find no buyer for it, and this called forth the following indignant letter from the artist:

To the Editor of the *Morning Post*

May 11th, 1836.

Sir,

It was stated in yesterday's *Post* that my *Xenophon*, having *failed* to procure a purchaser, was put up for raffle. It *never* failed to procure a purchaser, *because* it was *never* put up for sale. It was begun as a raffle picture from the first touch to the last, and I went through it entirely aided by the Royal Family, the Nobility and other subscribers.

The Academy said when I began this system it degraded the art; perhaps they forgot that Hogarth degraded it before, and Mr Baily (their own Academician) is degrading it now. So far from degrading it, it is in my opinion the most English way in the world; it gives every man, from the King on the Throne to the humblest tradesman, a chance and an interest.

R. B. Haydon.

The claim that *Xenophon* was painted to be raffled for and had never been offered for sale was well founded. Many of the

subscriptions had been paid several years before the raffle took place, including that of Goethe. The following is his letter to Haydon, in which he promises to take a share:

Weimar

*December 31st, 1831.*

My dear Sir,

The letter which you have had the kindness to address to me has afforded me the greatest pleasure; for as my soul has been elevated for many years by the contemplation of the important pictures formerly sent to me, which occupy an honourable station in my house, it cannot but be highly gratifying to me to learn that you still remember me, and embrace this opportunity of convincing me that you do so.

Most gladly will I add my name to the list of subscribers to your very valuable painting, and I shall give directions to my banker here to forward you the amount of my ticket through the hands of his correspondents in London, Messrs Coutts and Co.

Reserving to myself the liberty at a future period for further information, as well about the matter in question and the picture that is to be raffled for, as concerning other objects of Art, I beg to conclude the present letter by recommending myself to your friendly remembrance.

W. von Goethe.

The "important pictures" mentioned by Goethe as hanging in his house at Weimar were drawings from the Elgin Marbles, sent to him by Haydon, by whose pupils they were made.

Haydon's raffle was almost coincident with the opening of the Academy exhibition, arranged by Stanfield, Leslie and Pickersgill. It was the last held in the rooms which had witnessed the rivalry of Sir Joshua and Gainsborough, and on whose walls had been first displayed the masterpieces of Turner. For the new home of the Academy in Trafalgar Square was almost ready for occupation, and its galleries so far complete that they were used in April for the public display of the plans for the new Houses of Parliament submitted in competition by various architects.

Wilkie in the preceding year had explored Connaught, and had found there what he describes as astonishingly fine subjects in a district where "the whole economy of the people furnishes

the elements of the picturesque". An incident of their life was illustrated in his picture, No. 60 *The Peep o' Day Boy's Cabin*. It was much admired at the Academy, but Miss Edgeworth, whose knowledge of Irish pastoral life was intimate, thought that the painter had missed the Hibernian characteristics, and that all was "too neat, too nice, too orderly, for Irish and Ireland". *The Times*, which called the *Peep o' Day Boy's Cabin* "a picture of true and astounding interest", and said that Wilkie this year was unusually great, was even more enthusiastic about the two rising favourites, Maclise and Landseer. Maclise was told that he was destined to occupy a place in the front rank of historical painters in the modern school of all Europe, and of Landseer's picture, No. 14 *A Scene in Chillingham Park, with portrait of Lord Ossulston, etc.*, *The Times* said: "It is one of those extraordinary mixtures of man and animal nature worthy of being classed with pictures of the same kind by Rubens and Snyders. Indeed it is difficult to say whether the landscape, the portraits, or the animals are the best painted by this true observer of nature". The *Morning Post* characterized the Landseer as "superb".

Constable, whose pictures had been abused for years in the *Observer*, was this year the subject in its columns of a sympathetic and even flattering notice. The critic who was dismissed from the *Morning Chronicle* in 1834, had contributed his last reviews of picture galleries to the *Observer* in 1835, and his successor wrote as follows about *The Cenotaph* (9), the only painting exhibited this year by Constable:

The peculiar manner in which Mr Constable's pictures are painted makes them appear singular at first, but by choosing a proper distance for observing them, by degrees the effect seems to grow upon us until we are astonished that we did not like them better before. If exceeding truth to nature, finish without littleness, and pure, rich colouring are admirable in a picture, then surely Mr Constable's must be generally liked. We have seen pictures of his after they had been done some time, and were surprised how much superior they appeared to what they were when they were first painted.

*The Cenotaph* is a picture of the memorial to Sir Joshua Reynolds, erected by his friend and admirer, Sir George Beaumont,

in the grounds of Coleorton Hall. The picture was not sold at the Academy and remained in the possession of the painter's family until 1888, when it was bequeathed to the National Gallery by Miss Isabel Constable.

Of Turner's contributions to the Academy this year the most discussed was the *Juliet and her Nurse* (73). The differences of opinion among the critics concerning this picture were remarkable, ranging as they did from ridicule to almost extravagant praise. Most of them were hostile, including the reviewer of *The Times*, who, after calling Turner's *Mercury and Argus* (182) "a chemical compound of vermilion, brimstone and phosphorus", said of *Juliet and her Nurse* that it was nothing more than a second and worse edition of the artist's picture of the burning of the Houses of Parliament:

It is a Venetian Westminster Bridge, with a very rough resemblance to a young and an old woman standing in one of the alcoves and looking over the Thames, converted into Italian piazzas, in which are blazing bonfires, rockets, and all the various fireworks of a Vauxhall fête. Why will not Mr Turner confine himself to a line in which he stands pre-eminent—landscape, and even poetical landscape—instead of aspiring to represent Shakespeare's Juliet?

Shakespeare's Juliet! Why it is the tawdry Miss Porringer, the brazier's daughter, of Lambeth, and the Nurse is that twaddling old body Mrs Mac-Sneeze, who keeps the snuff-shop at the corner of Oakley Street.

The *Morning Herald*, on the other hand, found nothing to ridicule in the *Juliet and her Nurse*, but described it as a vision of the night, dreamy and poetic; and the eulogies of the *Morning Post* were expressed in a paragraph appreciative enough in some respects to gratify even Ruskin:

This is one of those magical pictures by which Mr Turner dazzles the sense and storms the imagination. Vague, indistinct, with a lavish display of colours unequalled and unapproachable, this picture is a perfect scene of enchantment. It might be called a carnival, or any other name that a festive crowd might suggest. Vessels in distress, rockets cleaving the sky, gay attire and everything that can complete the gorgeous are here, and so we suppose are Juliet and the Nurse in the balcony, for there is an indication of a balcony and female forms. But the merit of the picture is in its appeal through the

medium of colour to the imagination, and a more astonishing appeal was never made, nor a more splendid invention ever witnessed.

Turner, who is said to have objected to the removal of the Royal Academy from Somerset House, was not present at the farewell dinner of the artists, both members and outsiders, which was held in the Great Room on July 20th, after the close of the exhibition but while the pictures still hung in their places on the walls. The company included the President, Sir Martin Archer Shee, Wilkie, Callcott, Leslie, Chantrey, Constable, Mulready, Etty, Collins, Stanfield, Maclise, and the veteran Sir William Beechey, who had contributed in 1780 to the first exhibition held in the then newly-built Somerset House. After dinner the President proposed several toasts, among them "The Outsiders", which was responded to by Henry Sass, an artist at whose drawing-school many of the younger men present had been trained. Finally Chantrey rose, and, speaking with evident emotion, said that he was about to propose a toast with which they would all be in sympathy. To-night, he said, witnessed the close of the many exhibitions and convivial meetings held in this room. They were assembled for the last time within the walls which to many of them had been fortunate, and to all, agreeable and instructive, and however bright the prospects might be of their new quarters they could not leave without deep regret the home, as it were, of their fathers. He therefore gave as a toast—"The old Walls of the Academy", within which so much high talent had been nurtured and displayed.

The Great Room at Somerset House, which was the scene of the farewell dinner, was spacious and well lighted, but it was on the top floor of the building and therefore not easy of access except for the young and vigorous. An amusing account of the approach to it appeared in 1825 in the *News of Fashion and Literature*, written by a contributor who had recently visited the Royal Academy exhibition for the first time. He said:

Upon entering a small but well-proportioned hall, and after going through the indispensable ceremonies of paying your shilling admission and your other shilling for a catalogue; and of depositing your whip or stick in the

custody of a collector of those weapons, who, like the cashier and the catalogue distributor, sit in green baize duress, you look about, like Don Quixote's Rosinante, in order to determine which of many roads to take. To your right is a small doorway, beyond which you recognise a regiment of casts, busts and statues, while immediately before you is a dark, gloomy staircase, particularly destitute of light, and guarded by a colossal figure of Hercules. To the right and left of the Farnese Hercules are other doors, closed, however, like sealed books. What is to be done? The servants of the establishment are in no respect more intelligent or communicative than the Hercules, so you abandon yourself to your destiny, and with the aid of your glass manage somehow or other to pick your way upstairs.

On the first floor you arrive at a suite of apartments which you propose to enter, but are deterred from invading by a closed door bearing the respectable name of the Secretary of the Royal Academy. With much the same pleasant feeling of doubt and difficulty in which any Mr Johnson, who looking for a Mr Thompson on the second floor has strayed up another flight among the servants' rooms,—where every moment he expects to be apprehended and delivered to the watch on suspicion of a burglarious entry—you timidly venture to mount a little higher, and you arrive at an open cabinet with a few architectural drawings.

The visitor hopes that this is the beginning of the exhibition but on looking at his catalogue finds that No. 1 is a painting. All the architectural drawings are numbered in the hundreds, and so too are the miniatures, a collection of which he stumbles upon next. From the room containing the miniatures he strays into the Council Chamber, deserted and with the walls hung with old pictures, and is so disheartened that he makes up his mind to abandon the quest for No. 1. But his spirits rise again as he leaves the Council Chamber. He says, continuing his narrative:

As you prepare to descend and to return home you see some folks mounting up to the attics. A happy thought suggests itself, the staircase becomes absolutely light, and at length, sure enough, you come to a suite of rooms crowded with canvases. You naturally pause in the ante-chamber, but if you would find No. 1, you must still go on to the Great Room.

He looks round the Great Room for a time, but being "reasonably fatigued" cannot appreciate the pictures as they deserve, and "descends the weary stairs again and returns to Point Hercules infinitely too tired to venture even for five minutes

into the little cupboard in which the statuary is deposited. How the sculptors and modellers can endure such a system we cannot imagine. Not one visitor in ten sees their productions". The "little cupboard" was the room into which he had glanced before ascending the stairs, a room notorious for its inadequacy as a sculpture gallery.

The Academy staircase always had an evil reputation but there was no escape from it for those who wished to see the exhibition. The Prince Regent, his brother Princes, and the ambassadors, ministers and noblemen, all had to climb its flights when they were the guests of the Academicians at the annual banquets. George III, who frequently visited the exhibitions, appears to have managed the ascent without difficulty, but when Queen Charlotte accompanied him, a chair was placed on each landing in order that Her Majesty might rest if so inclined. Dr Johnson evidently regarded the ascent as a feat, as after his illness of 1784, he boasted to Sir John Hawkins that he was so completely recovered as to be able if necessary "to run up the whole staircase of the Royal Academy".

On October 20th, Robert Pollard, the engraver, offered to deposit with the Royal Academy, the books, documents and charter of the long extinct Royal Incorporated Society of Artists, of which he was the last surviving member. The offer was accepted and the records were delivered on October 26th, and on the 28th the following receipt, signed by the President, was sent to Pollard by the Secretary:

Royal Academy of Arts, London  
*October 28th, 1836.*

I hereby acknowledge to have received from Mr Robert Pollard, Fellow and Director of the Royal Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain,

(1) A box containing the papers and letters of the said Society, from 1760.

(2) A parcel of books containing the Minutes of the Directors, and of the general meetings of the Society.

(3) His Majesty's Royal Charter, contained in a case; being the original documents of the said Society.

Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A.

The Society to which these documents belonged originated in 1759, and held its first exhibition in 1760, but did not receive a charter until 1765. Its members then included most of the prominent artists of the time, but many of them seceded in 1768, and founded the Royal Academy with Sir Joshua Reynolds as President. The Minute and other books, and the letters, deposited by Pollard, are still at Burlington House, and are of great interest. They have, however, been little used by writers on art history, except by Mrs A. J. Finberg in some of the Walpole Society's volumes, and extensively by me in *Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799*. Pollard was eighty-one years old and in embarrassed circumstances when he deposited the documents, and was soon afterwards compelled to apply to the Academy for assistance from its charitable fund, which was immediately granted.

When the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Arts and Principles of Design was published late in the autumn, it was found to contain several recommendations and suggestions concerning the administration of the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, which, however had no effect on the conduct of either of those institutions. No reference was made in the report to the question of opening the National Gallery on Sundays, the desirability of which was urged by more than one witness. This question was revived five years afterwards in connection with the British Museum, when Sir Henry Ellis, Principal Librarian of the Museum, gave evidence in 1841, before the Select Committee on National Monuments. Sir Henry was strongly opposed to anything of the kind, and declared that it was "profaning the Sabbath to open places of amusement on that day".

The Royal Academy Minutes record, on the evening of November 7th, the election as an Associate of John Prescott Knight, who in the ballot defeated Charles Landseer by no fewer than fifteen votes to four. On the same evening Robert Graves was elected an Associate-Engraver, by seventeen votes to none for James Bromley, the only other candidate.

Several pictures belonging to the Royal Academy were cleaned or put in order this year in preparation for the removal to Trafalgar Square. It is stated in the Minutes that the full-length portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte were sent to John Segulier (brother of the Keeper of the National Gallery) to be cleaned. Segulier was also asked to examine the famous copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, now in the Diploma Gallery, and make suggestions for its preservation. His suggestions appear to have been approved, as he was asked in December to take the *Last Supper* in hand as soon as possible. There is no further reference to the picture in the Minutes but it is probable that Segulier worked upon it, and caused the change in its appearance that Sir Edwin Landseer lamented twenty-one years afterwards when giving evidence before the National Gallery Site Commission.

It had been advised that the National Gallery should be removed from Trafalgar Square to a site farther out and in purer air. Landseer in his evidence opposed this, because he believed that the influence of London's atmosphere on oil paintings was less deleterious than some of the previous witnesses had imagined. He cited works in London that were little, if at all, injured after long exposure to the atmosphere, and then mentioned the *Last Supper* as one that owed its bad condition less to such exposure than to some medium that had been applied to it. "The picture of all others", he said, "which appears to me to have suffered most, is one we have in the Royal Academy, the copy of the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. This arises rather from the oiling, or from some nostrum that has been used, to do what is called 'bringing it out'. All the light tints of that picture are of a mahogany colour now, and I think it gets darker. They asked to have it at the Manchester Exhibition but we thought its condition so doubtful that it was refused." The *Last Supper* has been successfully cleaned in modern times by Major Roller.

## CHAPTER XVII

1837

ALTHOUGH the connection of the Royal Academy with Somerset House was supposed to terminate at the close of 1836, the Life School was carried on in its old quarters until March 1837. The new buildings in Trafalgar Square were still damp in January, and in order to dry them, braziers were constantly in use in the rooms during the spring. After the Life School was removed to Trafalgar Square it was conducted in the dome of the new building, and Etty, although elderly and asthmatic, climbed the stairs, night after night, to paint from the nude among the students. On Etty's recommendation a French model named Fleuret, was allowed this year to pose in the Life School. Fleuret offered his services and asked for no remuneration except a silver medal, which was given to him. There is no explanation in the Minutes of his wishing to sit in such conditions or of the nature of the medal with which he was rewarded.

Immediately after the Academy vacated its galleries and rooms at Somerset House, they were used for the accommodation of the new School of Design—the outcome of the report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, which held its meetings in 1835. The pupils of the new school paid fees of four shillings a week, and were taught drawing and the principles of design, under the direction of J. B. Papworth, and of a committee which included Chantrey, Eastlake, Callcott, the landscape painter, and Cockerell, the architect. Dyce soon afterwards undertook the direction of the school, with which originated all the numerous State-aided institutions for instruction in drawing, design, painting and modelling, now controlled by the Board of Education.

Perhaps with the idea that there would be more space to cover on the walls of the Council Room and other private apartments at Trafalgar Square, several people presented pictures to the Royal Academy during the spring and summer. One, given by Sir Charles Dance, a nephew of Nathaniel Dance, R.A., was a portrait by his uncle of G. B. Cipriani, R.A. Another, equally acceptable for the Council Room, was presented by Turner. It was a portrait-group by Rigaud of three of the earlier Academicians, whose names, unfortunately, are not mentioned in the Minutes, and was perhaps a companion group to that of Reynolds, Chambers and Wilton, by the same artist, now in the National Portrait Gallery. It is recorded that Turner's gift was "thankfully received" by the Council, but it is not included in the collection of pictures belonging to the Academy, now at Burlington House.

Another portrait of an Academician, Francis Hayman, painted by Sir Joshua, was given by John Taylor, who had been Hayman's pupil. The donor of this portrait should not be confounded with John Taylor of Bath, the amateur landscape painter and friend of Garrick, or with that friend of many artists, John Taylor, the one-time editor of the *Morning Post*. The John Taylor who presented the portrait to the Academy (when he was ninety-seven) was the artist often mentioned by J. T. Smith in his *Nollekens and his Times* and *A Book for a Rainy Day*. It was he who told Smith that he remembered his master Hayman coming home from an exhibition, and praising Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, which he had seen there.

Taylor, who practised as a drawing-master as early as 1760, was a provident man and invested his savings in an annuity which was to expire in 1840. He died in 1839 in his ninety-ninth year. Taylor was more fortunate than another equally old artist, whose name also appears in the Minutes this year—James Pearson, the glass painter. A few months after Taylor presented the portrait of Hayman, Pearson, then in his ninety-seventh year, and "with no means of subsistence", was compelled to appeal to the Academy for help, and was granted twenty

pounds on the motion of Cockerell and Etty. The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that Pearson died in 1805, but this must be a mistake. In 1820 he wrote a letter to the *Literary Gazette*, in which he described himself as "the oldest artist in the kingdom in the art of painting on glass". And in 1821, Pearson and his wife, who had been intimate with James Barry, and had executed sets of glass paintings of Raphael's Cartoons for Lord Lansdowne, held an exhibition of their work at their house in Great Russell Street.

Of all the pictures presented to the Academy for its new rooms, the largest and best known was Lawrence's *Satan calling his Legions*, painted when the artist was twenty-eight, and exhibited in 1797 at Somerset House, where it was placed above the mantelpiece in the Great Room. It was ridiculed by Anthony Pasquin, but praised by other critics, and appears always to have been liked by Lawrence himself. This gigantic nude figure of Satan terrified the youthful Fanny Kemble when she saw it for the first time at Lawrence's house. She fancied that she could trace in its fierce and tragical expression some likeness to her uncle and aunt, John Philip Kemble and Mrs Siddons.

The *Satan* was in Lawrence's possession when he died, and was afterwards disposed of to Messrs Woodburn, the picture-dealers who purchased the Lawrence collection of drawings. They tried to sell it, but failed, and then offered it to the Academicians, by whom it was accepted, after some hesitation, as they did not, in fact, know where to put so large a canvas.

Until March, the Academy, as I have stated, continued in occupation of the Life School at Somerset House. The model sat for the last time in the old room on the evening of the 26th, when Constable, who had been the Academician Visitor for the month, made a farewell speech to the students, with whom he was very popular. The *Morning Post*, which published a long and eulogistic article on the landscape painter on April 4th, says of this speech:

Mr Constable addressed the students in a very friendly manner on the causes of the rise, progress, and decline of the arts. He pointed out to them the true

methods of study that lead to eminence, and warned them of the false principles which, though specious, terminate in disappointment and defeat. He expressed his hope that in taking their last farewell of the edifice which had been, as it were "the cradle of British art", they would remember with grateful feelings the advantages they had derived from the instruction received within its walls, and be emulous to show that the principles imbibed in the old School of Art were such as would do honour not only to the new establishment in Trafalgar Square but to their native land. He then returned them his most cordial thanks for the constant attention they had paid him and the diligence with which they had attended their studies during his Visitorship. At the conclusion of the address the students rose and cheered most heartily, never suspecting that this would be Mr Constable's last address.

Redgrave, who was painting from the nude model side by side with Etty on that evening, remarks of its close: "Poor Constable! He left Somerset House that night only to die. Yet he was, as usual, full of jokes and gibes, and he indulged in the vein of satire he was ever so fond of".

Constable died within a week of his last attendance at the Life School. On Friday, March 31st, he worked on his picture *Arundel Mill and Castle*, which he was preparing for the approaching Academy exhibition; went out in the evening for a short time, and after returning, went to bed and to sleep at his accustomed hour. He awoke soon afterwards in great pain, and died before the arrival of a doctor, it is supposed from acute indigestion. Leslie, his close friend and ardent admirer, describes how he was sent for, early on the following morning:

On the first of April, as I was dressing, I saw from my window, Pitt (a man employed by Constable to carry messages) at the gate. He sent up word that he wished to speak to me, and I ran down, expecting one of Constable's amusing notes, or a message from him; but the message was from his children and to tell me that he had died suddenly the night before. My wife and I were in Charlotte Street as soon as possible. I went up into his bedroom, where he lay, looking as if in a tranquil sleep; his watch, which his hand had so lately wound up, ticking on a table by his side, on which also lay a volume of Southey's *Life of Cowper*, which he had been reading scarcely an hour before his death. He had died as he lived, surrounded by art, for the walls of the little attic were covered with engravings, and his feet nearly touched a print of the beautiful moonlight by Rubens, belonging to Mr Rogers.

Leslie believed that Constable's sudden death was merciful, because if he had lingered on a sick bed he would have suffered agonies at the thought of leaving his seven children, already motherless, unprotected in the world. "His fondness for children", says Leslie, "exceeded that of any man I ever knew." Constable's affection for his own first-born child is shown in the following letter, written to his wife in London, when he was away at Flatford, staying with his sisters. He says: "Mrs Wilkinson's dear little baby is here—my sisters have given them leave to have the nursery here, and they sleep here because their house is so full of company. It is a nice little baby, but no more to compare with our sweet duck than if it did not belong to the species, though I daresay they would not think so. Its being here tantalizes me very much. When I hear his voice I often run upstairs and my heart quite flags with the disappointment".

There is other evidence of Constable's tenderness towards his family, of whom the boys appeared to have done much as they chose when their father was a widower. Robert Leslie, a playfellow of the young Constables, from whose article in *Temple Bar* I have already quoted, says on this point:

No one was more devoted to his children than Constable, and at the back of his house he had a large courtyard, glazed in as a playground for all weathers. Among many other interesting toys they had a complete working model of a fire engine; and one of the elder boys, after cutting holes in a large box to represent a house with windows, filled it with shavings and set fire to them. Another boy then rang a small bell and the fire engine appeared, but had scarcely begun to play upon the burning box when Constable, to whose studio the dense smoke had made its way, came among us, and saying "I won't have any more of this", looked for a can of water to put out the fire, while the author of the mischief coolly turned the hose of the little engine on the back of his father's head, who, instead of being furious with the boy, as I expected, appeared to think it rather a good joke, and after extinguishing the fire, went quietly back to his painting room.

A further instance of Constable's good temper where his boys were concerned, is given by Julian Charles Young, in one of the extracts from his own journal published in his memoir of his

father, the tragedian. He mentions that his uncle, Edward Young, told him the following story:

He called on Constable one day and was received by him in his front room. After half an hour's chat the artist proposed to repair to another room to show him a large picture on which he had been engaged. On walking up to his easel, he found that in his absence one of his little boys had dashed the handle of the hearth-broom through the canvas and made so large a rent as to render restoration impossible. He called the child up to him and asked him gently if he had done it. When the boy had admitted his delinquency, he rebuked him in these unmeasured terms: "Oh! my dear pet. See what we have done. What shall we do to mend it? I can't think, can you?"

The same writer, who appears to have known Constable very well, quotes from his journal the following interesting note on the importance of painting landscape in the open air. It is dated November 2nd, 1830:

I sat a long time with Constable the artist, and watched him paint. He is a most gentle and amiable man. His works will have greater justice done them by posterity when they have become mellowed and toned down by time. His theories of art are original and instructive. I was surprised to see the free and frequent use he makes of his palette knife in painting; often preferring it to his brush when he wants to give force and breadth to his subject. He told me that if he lived in the country and could afford it, he would never paint a landscape but in the open air. He told me that he believed most artists sketched their subjects out-of-doors and finished them in; and that he could distinguish the parts of a picture which had been painted *al fresco* from those which had been elaborated in the studio.

Leslie's life of Constable is the best biography extant of an English artist, but it has one weakness. It leaves the reader with an impression that the landscape painter was a man entirely without faults. Redgrave, who knew him, complains in his diary, when mentioning the publication of the biography, that the world will know Constable only through Leslie's agreeable life of him. "There he appears all amiability and goodness, and one cannot recognise the bland, yet intense, sarcasm of his nature; soft and amiable in speech, he yet uttered sarcasms which cut you to the bone." Redgrave, however, finds no fault with Constable except his bitter tongue, but the critic of the

*Morning Chronicle* and the *Observer*, in his numerous notes on the artist, was fond of hinting that his behaviour was rough and coarse. He said in the *Morning Chronicle* of December 26th, 1833, in a sarcastic passage about possible future leaders of the Royal Academy, and the way they might behave: "When Mr Turner is President he will lecture on the degradation which art suffers through an overwhelming love of filthy lucre. Mr Etty will stamp with detestation anything like looseness or indelicacy in painting. Mr Constable will laud the virtue and grace of suavity in the manners of the painter".

There are some notes bearing on this subject made by Anderdon in one of his annotated Academy catalogues at Burlington House. Anderdon, although acquainted with many of the prominent artists of his time, does not appear to have known Constable. But he was so much interested in him and so great an admirer of his work that after his death he went to East Bergholt to see the house in which he was born, and to find out if it contained any of the painter's early achievements. At East Bergholt he was received delightfully by Constable's brother, Abraham, "a gentleman though a miller", as he calls him. The brother had no pictures—not even a sketch—to show, but he gave the visitor some of Constable's letters, one of which is so badly written that it is illegible in parts.

Anderdon, therefore, could have had no reason for attacking Constable or recording unfairly anything that was said of him, but the following notes, dated May 1st, 1864, are written in his Academy catalogue of 1806: "Some have said that Constable was 'a man of coarse habits, and a great eater'. Speaking of his pictures to a brother Academician he said that 'when he was successful with a picture and it pleased him he was unwilling to part with it, and that when they were inferior he did not like to part with them'. And it was noticed that he was coarse in conversation in the presence of his wife and her friends, and thoroughly unguarded".

Uncomplimentary also was the view of Atkinson, the phrenologist, who thought that Constable's opinion of himself was far

too favourable. Atkinson stated this at a meeting of the Phrenological Society, held on November 1st, 1843, at which a cast of Constable's head, made the morning after his death, was produced and discussed, with the result that the development of the painter's organ of Form was declared to have been insufficient. The discussion was followed by an address on Constable by Thomas Uwins, R.A., afterwards Keeper of the National Gallery. It was highly appreciative of the painter's art and character and on this account was not altogether to the taste of Atkinson, who, speaking after Uwins, said:

I had the pleasure of Constable's acquaintance, and have been with him often when he has been at work. His small organ of Form never induced him to make out a careful outline or cartoon, but he scumbled about with his brush and the exact forms were made out last. He seemed to be never certain of what he was going to do, and, like Varley, made continual alterations and was ready to take advantage of any chance effect that might occur. He was in the habit of sticking pieces of white paper over his picture as a means of studying effect. He possessed great vanity and conceit. He thought his own works excellent, and would speak of Turner as his one great rival. He continually dwelt with singular minuteness on all which related to himself. The organs of Self-esteem and Love of Approbation were remarkably large.

David Roberts was of the same opinion as Atkinson about Constable's vanity. In some notes contributed by him to Thornbury's life of Turner he compares that artist with Constable. "Turner", he says, "was ever modest of his own abilities, and I never remember him uttering a word of disparagement of other artists. Of a contrary disposition was Constable, always talking of himself and his works, and unceasing in his abuse of others."

One side of Constable's activities has not, I believe, been mentioned by any of his biographers. In the life of Alaric Watts, the author and journalist, written by his son, it is stated that Constable was a writer of controversial pamphlets; presumably on matters of art. With Watts, Constable was intimately acquainted and some of his letters to him still exist. The younger Watts says of their friendship, that his father "loved to inter-

change letters of criticism on the art abuses of the day, or to draw round the evening fire and listen with a sympathising ear to his friend's denunciations of the cant, ignorance, dishonesty, hypocrisy, and what not, of the age. There was about Constable a ruggedness and honesty; a frank outspokenness and fearlessness, which was much in harmony with my father's character, and contributed to make them friends. Constable was not averse to controversy, and indulged in the dangerous diversion of writing pamphlets, which, as he was not wholly dependent on the public, who did not very generally appreciate his pictures, we may hope did good to them without doing any mischief to himself".

Constable's death took place only three days before the works were received for the Academy exhibition, the first to be held in the new buildings in Trafalgar Square, in the internal arrangements of which he and the other members of the Council had been more or less busy since Christmas. They had ordered the wainscot-lining of the galleries to be painted "a fine Spanish brown", which it was said, experience had proved to be the best ground for the walls of an exhibition of paintings and sculpture; and in preparation for the expected visit of the King had purchased six hundred yards of green baize for the temporary covering of the floors on that occasion.

As more works could be placed in the Trafalgar Square galleries than in those at Somerset House, the Hanging Committee was increased this year from three members to five, and was composed of Turner, Hilton, Ety, Chantrey and Cockerell. During its proceedings the Committee had to deal with an astonishing demand by Baily the Academician—that he should be allowed to be present at the arrangement of his work in the Sculpture Gallery! The demand, instantly refused, was repeated by Baily in later years, always with the same result.

The new home of the Royal Academy in Trafalgar Square was the eastern half of the front portion of the present National Gallery. This comprised the rooms known now as Nos. XII, XIII, XIV, XV, and XVII, as well as part of No. XVIII. The

Academy also occupied all the space beneath these rooms, and in this lower portion were the Library, the Council Room, the Keeper's residence, and various offices. The Sculpture Gallery, a semicircular apartment, was also on this floor, which was divided about midway by a passage leading from Trafalgar Square to Duke's Court and Castle Street. This was an ancient right of way through the Royal Mews, and could not be diverted. The right of way caused trouble to the Academicians in their earlier years at Trafalgar Square. From the first it was closed at night at the Duke's Court end, but until 1845 there was no gate at the entrance from Trafalgar Square, and after dark all kinds of undesirable persons found shelter in the passage. Mr John MacMaster, who mentions the passage in his book, *St Martin's in the Fields*, says that he remembers when there was an apple-stall in it, kept by an old woman. Of the Academy's exhibition galleries the best was the East Room, the nearest to St Martin's Lane, and now Room XII at the National Gallery. The western half of the building in Trafalgar Square, intended for the accommodation of the National Gallery, was still unfinished when the King opened the new Royal Academy on April 28th.

The King, who drove from Windsor, reached Trafalgar Square at one o'clock. It was a day of beautiful weather, an immense crowd was gathered in the Square, and sightseers occupied every point of vantage, including the roof of St Martin's Church. The ground in front of the Gallery was kept by the Guards, whose band provided music until the arrival of the King. His Majesty, whose approach was watched by the members of the Council, gathered together at the top of the steps, beneath the portico, received from the President the keys of the Academy on a silver plate. The keys, highly polished, had arrived from Birmingham that morning, and it had only just been discovered that they did not fit the locks! Fortunately they were not tried by the King, who went through all the galleries, and left before three o'clock, when the visitors to the Private View were admitted. Among these visitors were the Duchess of Kent and her

daughter, the young Princess Victoria, the future Queen, who mingled with the crowd without ceremony.

Critical opinion of the new galleries, as expressed in the journals, was mostly adverse. They were praised half-heartedly by a few writers and condemned more or less severely by many. The *Morning Post* declared that the building in Trafalgar Square was a combination of all that was ungraceful and inconvenient; the *Examiner* cited it as "a grand example of how the very worst can be done at the greatest expense. It shows what can be accomplished when the amplest means and the worst taste go hand-in-hand together". Some of the critics were of opinion that except for the terrors of the staircase the Academy's old quarters at Somerset House were preferable to the new. The *Spectator*, at this time violently opposed to the Academy and all its works, described the building as paltry: "in every way unworthy of its purpose and unworthy of the country. It is a libel on the taste of the nation. The whole thing was well and truly characterized by the blunt, plain-spoken Sailor King, who spoke of it as 'a nasty little pokey hole'".

The first exhibition at Trafalgar Square was not of exceptional interest. Etty's huge fourteen-feet-by-ten picture, *The Sirens and Ulysses* (122), hanging in a centre place in the East Room, was one of the chief attractions. This picture was admired by all the critics as a work of art, but Etty was reprov'd for its alleged horrors and impropriety. "The composition of this picture", said the *Observer*, "is fine and the painting beautiful, but the subject cannot fail of producing the most unpleasant feelings. Ulysses is represented at the interview with the Sirens, who are completely in a state of nudity; the ground is covered with dead bodies and skeletons, and the earth saturated with gore. However cleverly treated such a subject could be, it is to be hoped there are few who would nauseate their friends by placing it in their galleries." The *Spectator* regarded *The Sirens* as "a disgusting combination of voluptuousness and loathsome putridity", but as glowing in colour and wonderful in execution. This picture, now in the City Art Gallery, Manchester, was intended by Etty

to be realistic. His biographer says that to obtain truthfulness in the more appalling details, "he paid assiduous visits to charnel houses, carefully studying from dead bodies in all the stages of decay".

Landseer increased his popularity by exhibiting that well-known work, *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner* (112), and *The Highlands* (160), and Wilkie in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* (358) returned in some degree to his earlier manner. The last contribution from the hand of Constable, *Arundel Mill and Castle* (193) was barely noticed by the critics and Turner, though he almost escaped abuse, was but little praised. His pictures included *The Parting of Hero and Leander* (274), now the property of the nation, but not, according to Ruskin, as it was when it was first exhibited. "Turner's storm-blues", says Ruskin, "were produced by a black ground, with opaque blue mixed with white struck over it. In cleaning the *Hero and Leander* these upper glazes were taken off and only the black ground left. I remember the picture when its distance was of the most exquisite blue."

The King, who was in perfect health when he opened the first exhibition of the Royal Academy held in Trafalgar Square, died on June 20th, while the pictures were still on the walls. William IV was not a connoisseur like his predecessor on the throne, but he appears to have taken some interest in the arts, and according to Sir Martin Archer Shee was always obliging and courteous in dealing with business relating to the Royal Academy. When, in July, 1830, he visited the exhibition, with Queen Adelaide, for the first time after his accession, Lord Farnborough brought forward Shee, to introduce him. The King, however, said that it was unnecessary, as recently, at the dinner of the Theatrical Fund, he had already had the pleasure of proposing Mr Shee's health as the newly elected President of the Royal Academy. And on taking leave of the President, the King said to him: "You must come to the levee tomorrow, where of course I shall knight you".

Queen Adelaide was something of an artist, and liked to draw

the portraits of members of her Court, and other acquaintances, not always to their satisfaction. Lord Ronald Gower in his *Stafford House Letters*, describes an incident witnessed by his father, Lord Stafford (afterwards Duke of Sutherland), when the King and Queen were at Brighton, in 1833. "The Queen", said Lord Stafford, "does not work on Sundays, but draws, and the Duke of Devonshire had to sit facing her for an hour and a half, to have his portrait drawn by Her Majesty in her book. I was rather alarmed at having the book opened at the Queen's desire to show me a portrait. Luckily I knew it immediately to be the Duchess of Cambridge. Some of them are not guessed so easily."

The Queen's own features were not of a kind that an artist would represent for choice. She was plain, and was well aware of the fact, and much too sensible to be ashamed of it. When she sat for the first time to Sir Martin Archer Shee, and he was studying her face for the best point of view, she said, with an amiable smile and in the unmistakable accent of sincerity: "Oh! Sir Martin, I pity you indeed for having such a subject!" Shee's son, who describes the incident, says that the Queen's remark put his father into an awkward position. The truth of the sitter's criticism of herself was obvious, and yet it would have been disrespectful to have remained silent. The gallant Irishman got out of it cleverly, by a reply that sounded well but meant little. "Madam", he said, "I hope to have the honour of showing your Majesty, on the canvas, my impression of your Majesty's claims as a subject."

Some of the appointments of artists to positions in the households of William IV and Queen Adelaide caused amusement on account of the very moderate merit of the men thus honoured. Two of the artists in particular were ridiculed in 1834 by that critic of the *Observer* who was the enemy of Constable. After mentioning in his review of the Academy the portrait of the Queen by Wilkie, the critic laughs at the recent appointments of "Mr Parris, Historical Painter to the Queen", and "Mr Huggins, Marine Painter to His Majesty", and says: "Opposite Norfolk

Street in the Strand we long remember seeing (and delighted we were to see the Royal repose so secured) 'Tiffin, Bug Destroyer to His Majesty', and we have been startled at no appointment since".

The accession of Queen Victoria was followed within a month by the announcement in the *Gazette* of the bestowal of knight-hoods upon Callcott, the landscape painter; William John Newton, "miniature-painter in ordinary to the Queen-Dowager"; and Westmacott, the sculptor who modelled the much-discussed figure of Achilles in Hyde Park. Why these particular artists should have been selected for distinction is not apparent, but it was believed at the time that the honours had been bestowed upon them by William IV and were only confirmed by Queen Victoria. Callcott, whose claims to official recognition it would be absurd to compare with those of Turner, was a man much liked and respected, and he and his work received further compliments from Royalty a few years afterwards. He was appointed Keeper of the Queen's Pictures, and Prince Albert bought six of his paintings at the curious sale held after his death in 1844. In his will Callcott desired that his sketches and pictures in oil should not go to the auction room, but on a fixed day should be arranged in his house with prices attached, and that his friends should be invited to see them. This was done, and his paintings had so many admirers that they were all sold, and at good prices. Callcott was born and died in the house in which the pictures were sold, a Queen Anne house that stood in the Mall, Kensington, in the days when the Mall was tree-bordered and picturesque, and provided subjects for Mulready, who lived close by.

A writer in the *Spectator* of July 29th, when commenting on the titles bestowed upon Callcott, Newton and Westmacott, said that Landseer had also been offered a knighthood, and refused it, for the same reason, it was supposed, "that caused Stanfield to decline the knighthood that was offered him by William IV—namely, that he wanted a baronetcy". There is no record or tradition of the offer of a knighthood to Stanfield

at any time, or to Landseer so early as 1837; but Landseer did refuse a knighthood five years afterwards, when it was offered to him by Queen Victoria, always an ardent admirer of his work. The offer was made in May, 1842, and on the 31st of that month, Sir Robert Peel, then Prime Minister, informed the Queen that he had just seen the artist, and said:

Mr Landseer repeated his expressions of deep and sincere gratitude for the favour and kindness with which your Majesty had contemplated his claims for professional distinction, but appeared to retain the impression that he had scarcely yet done enough to entitle him to the honour which it was contemplated to bestow upon him. In the course of conversation he observed that he was now occupied upon works of a more important character than any he had yet completed, and mentioned particularly an equestrian portrait of your Majesty. He said that when these works were finished, and should they prove successful and meet with your Majesty's approval, he might feel himself better entitled to receive a mark of your Majesty's favour.

Landseer was knighted in 1850, and according to George Augustus Sala there was some question of elevating him to the peerage in 1857, at the same time that a barony was bestowed upon Macaulay for his distinction in literature. This is not improbable, for in the mid-Victorian period the opinion in England of Landseer's talent was extravagantly high.

To return to 1837, an interesting announcement was made in July, by a Committee formed of friends and admirers of Constable, and organized to acquire one of his most characteristic works for presentation to the National Gallery. The Committee was offered the choice of two pictures in the possession of Constable's executors, the large *Salisbury from the Meadows*, and *The Cornfield*, and now announced that it had chosen the latter. The sum required for its purchase, three hundred guineas, was raised by private subscription. The Committee included Sir William Beechey, Leslie, Ety, Lee, Clarkson Stanfield, Mr Carpenter, Mr Purton, Mr Sheepshanks, Mr Hardisty, and Mr Young. Messrs Drummond, the bankers, and Mr John Murray received the subscriptions. Twenty Royal Academicians were among the contributors.

It was Constable's old friend, William Purton, who suggested the purchase of a picture for the National Gallery, but Leslie was mainly instrumental in collecting the necessary funds by writing to all those he thought would be likely to contribute. No trouble was too great for Leslie to take in any matter that concerned Constable. He wrote his life of him without any reward beyond the pleasure of connecting his name with that of his friend. Leslie mentions this in the following letter, sent to Etty with a prospectus of the book, which was published by subscription:

12 Pine Apple Place  
Edgware Road  
*June 13, 1842.*

My dear Etty

I have no design on your pocket in sending this, for I get nothing by the publication except the satisfaction of associating my name with that of Constable, but I could not let it go to the press without giving you notice of it.

I am, dear Etty,

Yours very truly

C. R. Leslie.

Pine Apple Place, where Leslie lived and painted, and Romney once had a house, was on the east side of Edgware Road, between what are now Hall Road and Abercorn Place. Constable was a frequent visitor to Pine Apple Place, which in his time was still semi-rural. Robert Leslie says, in the article from which I have before quoted: "He was my father's dearest and most valued friend, and I can see his handsome face now as he used to sit on a summer evening in our little front room in Edgware Road, sipping what he called 'a dish of tea', and admiring some effect of sky from the window, which looked towards the west, in those days over a wide stretch of sweet-smelling hay fields full of fine oaks and elms."

It is curious that although Constable's landscapes were never really popular while he lived, forgeries of them began to make their appearance not long after his death. To Leslie, as the artist best acquainted with Constable's work, numbers of these spurious

examples were submitted from time to time for his opinion, which was soon given. The largest batch of forgeries sent to Pine Apple Place came from a dealer well acquainted with Constable's work, who told Leslie that he would not have troubled him if the paintings had not come from a gentleman whose name appeared to guarantee that they were genuine, and who actually said that he had seen Constable at work on some of them. They were all sketches but one, which was a large landscape more cleverly forged than the others. The dealer declared that the large landscape had been shown to Clarkson Stanfield, who pronounced it to be a Constable!

Several pictures and sketches were given by Constable to Leslie, and were sold after his death by Foster the auctioneer. Interesting notes on some of them were printed in the catalogue. Of No. 97 *The Glebe Farm*, it was said: "Mr Leslie saw Constable at work on this picture, and told him he liked it so much that he did not think it wanted another touch. Constable said, 'Then take it away with you, that I may not be tempted to touch it again'. The same evening the picture was sent to Mr Leslie as a present". *The Glebe Farm* realized a hundred and twenty guineas at the sale. Another note followed the title of No. 92 *Sketch in Suffolk, near East Bergholt*. "On the back is written, in Constable's writing: 'Made this sketch, October, 1817. Old Joseph King, my father's huntsman, came to me at the time; there was a barn in which he had thrashed that time seventy years'. In Leslie's writing: 'This masterly sketch seems to have been painted entirely in the open air and at one sitting.'" Joseph King's recollections, mentioned by Constable, connect him with Gainsborough's period. When King was thrashing in the barn by the Stour in 1747, Gainsborough, at Sudbury, by the same river and only twelve miles away, was painting that famous landscape, now in the National Gallery, *Wood-Scene, Great Cornard, Suffolk*, the earliest picture by him of which there is any record or exact date. Oddly enough, this landscape was afterwards for many years the property of Constable's uncle, David Pike Watts.

The first election of members of the Royal Academy held in

the new building in Trafalgar Square took place on November 6th. Two vacancies were filled. In the first election, George Patten defeated Charles Landseer, the brother of Sir Edwin Landseer, by ten votes to nine. In the second, Landseer defeated R. J. Wyatt by eleven votes to six. Linnell was again a candidate, but received no support, although his relations with the Academy were at this time friendly and he had in the summer presented to the Library a set of engravings of the paintings by Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel.

George Patten, the first elected of the two Associates, is best known as the painter of what has sometimes been described as the only portrait of Paganini. The famous violinist was, of course, painted by other artists, but that Patten's portrait pleased him extremely is shown by the following letter, which was published many years ago in the *Athenaeum*:

Au distingué peintre M. Patten à Londres.

Le portrait que vous avez bien voulu me faire est tellement ressemblant que je ne pourrai jamais assez vous en exprimer ma satisfaction. J'en attends l'envoi avec impatience, et un tel don sera un précieux souvenir pour les miens, et l'Italie verra avec admiration l'œuvre d'un génie britannique tel que vous êtes.

Agréez les sentiments de ma plus haute estime et amitié, avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur de me dire

Votre très affectionné ami,

N. Paganini.

Only one event of importance to the world of art in 1837 remains to be recorded. This was the death of Lord Egremont, which took place on November 11th, five days after the elections at the Royal Academy. Lord Egremont, who was a bachelor and immensely rich, kept open house at Petworth, his famous seat in one of the most beautiful parts of Sussex, and painters and sculptors were always his welcome guests. Turner was frequently at Petworth where he sketched, and painted, not only in Lord Egremont's park, but in his house. Of Turner's pictures of the house a well-known example is the *Interior at Petworth*, now in the National Gallery.

An interesting glimpse of Petworth and its master, nine years before Lord Egremont's death, is to be found in *The Creevy Papers*. Creevy visited the house in 1828 with Lord Sefton, and he describes it in some notes in his diary written on August 18th. He says of Petworth:

Nothing can be more imposing and magnificent than the effect of this house the moment you are within it, not from that appearance of comfort which strikes you so much at Goodwood, for it has none; but the magnitude of the place being seen all at once, the scale of every room, gallery, passage, etc.; the infinity of pictures and statues throughout, made as agreeable an impression upon me as I ever witnessed.

How we got into the house I don't quite recollect (for I think there is no bell) but I know we were some time at the door, and when we *were* let in by a footman he disappeared *de suite* and it was some time before we saw anybody else. At length a young lady appeared, and a very pretty one too, very nicely dressed and with very pretty manners, a Miss Wyndham, daughter of Lord Egremont's brother William, who is dead. We had been half an hour looking at the pictures when in comes my Lord Egremont, as extraordinary a person, perhaps, as any in England. He is aged seventy-seven and is as fresh as may be, with a most incomparable and acute understanding, with much more knowledge upon all subjects than he chooses to pretend to, and which he never discloses but incidentally, as it were by compulsion. Simplicity and sarcasm are his distinguishing characteristics.

He has a fortune, I believe, of £100,000 a year, and never man could have used it with such liberality and profusion as he has done. He was very civil, and immediately said "What will you do?" In the interval, while carriages were being brought, he slouched along the rooms with his hat on and his hands in his breeches' pockets, making occasional observations upon the pictures and statues which were almost always agreeable and instructive, but so rambling and desultory—and walking on all the time—that it was quite provoking to pass so rapidly over such valuable materials. . . . When I retired to my bedroom I found it to be, upon measurement, about thirty feet by twenty feet and high in proportion. The bed would have held six people in a row without the slightest inconvenience to each other.

It was well that the bedrooms and beds were of uncommon size at Petworth, for visitors were always numerous, and when Lord Egremont invited his favourite artists to stay at his house it was his frequent custom to ask their families also. Robert Leslie went to Petworth with his father and mother when he was

a child, at a time when Turner was also one of Lord Egremont's guests, and he tells a story which shows the great painter in a favourable light. "I shall never forget", says Leslie in *A Water-biography*, "how, while watching some trimmers set for pike in the lake in the park, Turner gave me an early lesson in seamanship. He rigged scraps of paper, torn from his sketch book, upon three little sticks stuck in a bit of board to represent a full-rigged ship, which to my great delight he then launched upon the lake."

The master of Petworth was always a collector of works of art, and at first purchased pictures by old as well as by modern masters. But many years before his death, he told Phillips, the portrait painter, that he had made a resolution to buy thenceforth nothing but the productions of his own time, because he could thus most beneficially patronize the arts and render them useful and honourable to the country. To this resolution he adhered, and built an extensive gallery at Petworth only to house his collection of modern works, which at the time of his death comprised one hundred and seventy pictures and twenty-one pieces of sculpture, nearly all of which had been commissions to artists or purchased from them directly. There were besides many other pictures at his houses in London and Brighton. Lord Egremont was a liberal paymaster, but very careless in money matters, and his executors were obliged to contest the claims made upon his estate by John Edward Carew, the sculptor. Carew, who had worked for Lord Egremont for some years and received large sums from him from time to time, sent in an account to his executors for £50,310. 5s. 4d. which included two items of £4000 and two of £3000 for different pieces of statuary, and £31,000 for "professional and other labour" from 1823 to 1837. The executors regarded his claim as preposterous, and declined to consider it. Litigation followed, with disastrous results to the sculptor, who became insolvent.

Lord Egremont never married, but he was engaged for a time to Lady Maria Waldegrave, one of those three beautiful great-nieces of Horace Walpole who figure in a famous portrait-

group by Sir Joshua. For some reason the engagement was broken off, and Walpole, when writing to Sir Horace Mann in July, 1780, speaks bitterly of Lord Egremont's want of attention to Lady Maria and describes him as "a most worthless young fellow". In other contemporary letters a dispute about the amount of the settlement is said to have caused the breach, but if this be true Lord Egremont's character must have changed remarkably with advancing years, for at Petworth he was almost worshipped for his generosity. "His greatest pleasure", says Haydon, who knew him well, "was in sharing with the highest and humblest the advantages and luxuries of his vast income. The very animals at Petworth seemed happier than in any other spot on earth."

When he died Lord Egremont was within a month of his eighty-sixth birthday and his acquaintance with English art and artists had covered a very long period. He had an immense admiration for Hogarth, and may have seen him, for he was thirteen at the time of Hogarth's death. He certainly knew the great men—Reynolds, Gainsborough and the rest—who followed Hogarth; and the more important of their successors down to the end of the reign of William IV. He was buried at Petworth, in a vault built by himself, on November 21st, and more than a thousand mourners walked in the funeral train. There was not a single vehicle except the hearse, which was drawn by sixteen men. One of the most remarkable features of the procession was a body of four hundred labourers, walking two by two, and wearing white smocks with black crape armlets and black gloves. A group of artists walked before the hearse with Turner at their head.

With the passing of Lord Egremont—the great friend and supporter of painters and sculptors during the period described in the present volume—I bring to a close my record of additions to the history of art and artists in England, from the year 1821 to the commencement of the Victorian era.

## APPENDIX

### THE NATIONAL GALLERY

#### EARLY DAYS IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

IN the spring of 1838 the nation's pictures were removed by Seguier from No. 105 Pall Mall, and re-hung in the newly built gallery in Trafalgar Square, through which, on April 7th, Queen Victoria was conducted by Sir Martin Archer Shee, P.R.A. Two days afterwards it was thrown open to the public. The rooms in which the pictures were shown were in the western half of that part of the present National Gallery which faces Trafalgar Square. The accommodation was identical with that allotted to the Royal Academy in the eastern half of the new buildings, and the exhibition rooms were those known to-day as Nos. XX, XXI, XXII, and XXIV. Room XX was then divided into two small galleries, with a passage between them leading from the vestibule to Room XXI and those beyond it.

The opening of the western half of the new building was followed by a renewal of the criticisms which had been bestowed upon the eastern portion when it was occupied by the Royal Academy in the preceding year. No one liked the architect's design, and the *Morning Herald* found fault even with his choice of the site. *The Times* condemned the entire plan of the building, inside and out, and was unduly severe in its comments on the size of the rooms, which, as can be seen to-day, were of respectable extent. Even the two small apartments, called by Wilkins "the lesser galleries", were thirty-five feet in length by nineteen in breadth. *The Times* said of the new building:

The rooms in which the pictures are hung are but badly calculated for the purpose, and the interior of the plan is more than commensurate in defects with the absurdities and bad taste of the outside. . . . It is distressing to see the manner in which the pictures are hid in the little receptacles in which they are now deposited, and it is disgraceful to the national respectability to tolerate the existence, much more the original erection, of such a honeycomb of cells for the exhibition of those great works of art on which so much money has been vainly lavished. The place yesterday was crowded with visitors, who seemed for the most part doubtful whether or not they had mistaken the nature of the building they had entered, and many of them were enquiring of the attendants in which part of it the gallery was situated.

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Some of the newspapers paid little attention to the opening of the National Gallery, which was but briefly noticed even by the *Athenaeum* and the *Literary Gazette*, although those journals had figured prominently in the earlier disputes about the design of the building, the first supporting Wilkins and the second decrying him. The best account of the National Gallery of 1838 and of the pictures it contained, is to be found in the *Spectator*, which four years earlier had denounced as a job the appointment of Wilkins and still despised him as an architect. On April 14th, after a contemptuous reference to "the Tunbridge Toy in Trafalgar Square", the critic of the *Spectator* said: "The suite of rooms corresponds with that allotted to the Academy Exhibition, consisting of two closets on either side of the passage, and three good-sized apartments beyond. Such is the English National Gallery, for which the country has paid above £80,000! The best that can be said of this paltry place is that there is plenty of light, though it requires better management. There is only one picture that is not seen to advantage, but this is no other than the *Raising of Lazarus* by Sebastian del Piombo, the grandest of all".

The *Raising of Lazarus* was the largest picture in the collection, and according to the writer in the *Spectator* none of the rooms at Trafalgar Square was lofty enough for it to be placed in a proper light. He admitted that the rooms provided space enough for the hundred and forty-eight pictures then in the National Gallery, but complained that there was no possibility of arranging them in classes, the need for which, he said, did not seem to have entered the wise head of the architect who planned the building:

The consequence is a heterogeneous mixture of styles and sizes—Italian, Flemish and English, jumbled together. We have a Beggar Boy by Murillo cheek by jowl with a Christ in the Garden of Correggio's; both being put out of countenance by a trio of fashionable women by Sir Joshua, giving themselves airs in the character of the Graces. The richest array is in the great room, the last that is entered; it contains the Titian, the Claudes, the Correggios, and the Carraccis; the Lazarus and others by Sebastian del Piombo; Raphael's portrait of Pope Julius, and two large landscapes by Gaspar Poussin—in short the cream of the collection.

In the next room are the Rubenses—a gorgeous display—the Vandycks, Rembrandts and Poussins. The other rooms are more miscellaneous. The two cupboards present a striking contrast. That on the left contains, besides West's tea-board paintings, a weak allegorical piece by Angelica Kauffman, and other recent additions, consisting of Lawrence's whole-length portrait of Kemble as Hamlet, and his President West; together with Reynolds' portrait of Lord Ligonier on horseback, and some worthless trash such as a picture-broker in Wardour Street would turn up his nose at.

This room, much to the credit of the public taste, is commonly empty; but

the opposite one, containing Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*, Wilkie's inimitable *Blind Fiddler* and *Village Festival*, some landscapes by Gainsborough and Wilson, and one by Constable, is always crowded.

Pictures mentioned by the same critic as unworthy of exhibition include a large work by Nicholas Poussin, *Phineus and his followers turned to Stone at sight of Gorgon*; Sir George Beaumont's landscape mentioned on p. 127; Hoppner's portrait of "Gentleman Smith"; a portrait of Izaak Walton, by Huysman; and a moonlight study by Pether. After remarking that the inclusion of such works will make the Gallery the laughing-stock of foreigners, he says:

What with the meanness of the buildings, the motley and ill-assorted collection, and the shabby lining of the walls—strips of board licked over with paint of a dull green hue—the place has more the look of an auction sale-room than a public gallery. The proper ground for showing pictures to advantage is red; deep crimson hangings would harmonize and enrich the *ensemble*, but here the cold neutral tint and bare ribs at the back are annoying to the eye and injurious to the effect.

The pictures have all been cleaned and varnished afresh, but they have happily escaped the injury we apprehended, and are come unscathed from the perilous ordeal. The process was evidently needful and seems to have been judiciously and carefully performed. *The Watering Place*, by Gainsborough; the large landscape by Gaspard Poussin; and *The Brazen Serpent* by Rubens (one of the recent acquisitions) in particular, are wonderfully improved. They are quite different pictures now that the dirt is washed off. We fancied, however, that in the Cuyp the golden haze in the distance had vanished.

Of the pictures noticed as successfully cleaned, *The Watering Place* is the larger of the two landscapes of that title by Gainsborough now in the National Gallery. The Gaspard Poussin is the *Landscape: Dido and Æneas*; and the Cuyp, the large *Landscape, Cattle and Figures: Evening*. Constable's landscape, mentioned above as hanging in one of the small rooms, is *The Cornfield*, which, as I have stated in Chapter xvii, had been presented to the Gallery by a body of the artist's admirers. The critic of the *Spectator* appears to have liked *The Cornfield*, but it found no favour in the eyes of the representative of *The Times*, who thought its colouring partook too much of the "egg and spinach" style, to resemble the vegetation of an English landscape. In his opinion it was "certainly not fit to be in the Gallery".

The colour of the walls of the National Gallery was condemned by most of the critics of 1838, but it was not changed until the autumn of 1853. It was described by a visitor at that time as "a repulsive and ineffective cold grey-green"; and Thomas Uwins, then Keeper of the Gallery, thought that both the colour of the walls and the divisional lines

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of its panelling were injurious to the effect of the pictures. The Trustees therefore decided that the walls should be covered with an embossed flock paper "of a maroon colour, similar to that now upon the walls of Messrs Colnaghi's large room in Pall Mall East".

In the early days at Trafalgar Square there was little of the exact order and decorum of the modern National Gallery. Children had been admitted from the first, when the Gallery was in Pall Mall, by the desire of Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister. He thought that the admission of children would encourage their parents to visit the Gallery; and to Trafalgar Square, especially on Mondays, men and women of the humbler classes brought their young families, "children in arms, and a train of children around and following them". The children sometimes played in the rooms and it was a common thing to see orange peel thrown into the corners.

Eating and drinking were frequent, though against the rules, and when Uwins was Keeper he was sometimes compelled to interfere in person when attempts were made to use the Gallery as a place of refreshment. He found one day a party of country people who had brought in a basket of food and drink, and were lunching in great comfort, with their chairs drawn together in a circle. They were not dismayed by the Keeper's expostulations, but begged him to join them, and one of the ladies of the party offered him a glass of gin. But good order was kept upon the whole, and it is to the credit of the very small staff of the National Gallery that during the first decade at Trafalgar Square only one picture suffered injury—Mola's *Leda*. And this injury was due, not to crowded rooms or disorderly people but to the mistaken zeal of a religious fanatic.

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