

I confirm that the whole of this
thesis is written by me and is the
result of my own investigations.

All photographic work connected
with the study of the paintings
discussed is by me (other than
some few slides and photographic
prints obtained from major art
galleries).

A STUDY OF THE PAINTING OF
ARTHUR HUGHES

by
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The thesis undertakes the first study of the painting of Arthur Hughes and is based upon inquiries which establish the work which he produced throughout his career. All the painting which can be located up to the present time is noted after examination.

The thesis examines the principal paintings by Arthur Hughes from youth to old age and comments critically on these, noting the features which distinguish his painting from other work using the Pre-Raphaelite style.

A catalogue of painting which is certainly by Arthur Hughes is provided, and illustrations are given by means of photographic prints or coloured transparencies of all the work which I have been able to locate.

The thesis attempts to prove that the commonly held belief that Arthur Hughes' work declines into weakness after the early 1860s is incorrect, and by drawing upon examples for examination, suggests that in his middle and later periods, although he was no longer aiming at virtuoso performance, his work retains the power to charm, particularly when he invests the ordinary domestic life with poetic overtones.

I find that the complaint that he changed his early approved style is unreasonable, and demonstrate that although his

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No book on Arthur Hughes has been published other than the reprint of the articles concerning the Penkill letters of Arthur Hughes to William Bell Scott and Alice Boyd 1886-97, "A Pre-Raphaelite Gazette" by William E. Fredeman, which appeared originally in the "Bulletin of the John Rylands Library", Volume 49, No. 2, Spring 1967 and Volume 50, No. 1, Autumn 1967. Professor Fredeman has given me permission to quote from it.

I wish to thank the Librarians and the Staff of the Art Galleries in Great Britain and abroad who have assisted me in my inquiries and examination of works attributed to Arthur Hughes and other 19th century artists. Similarly I wish to thank the Staff of the Auction Rooms at London and the Provinces who have allowed me to examine works in their care.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks assistance received from numerous private collectors and interested persons. I have received much help from the following families in particular: Munro, Trist, Leathart, Rae, Rossetti, Hale-White, Finch, and Hill.

his paintwork broadens in the later 1860s, the richness of his colour and the quality of his selective extraction from Nature is not impaired. I show that in his continued domestic and romantic subjects as well as in Portraits, and studies of children, the high quality is on average maintained, and that in landscape he consistently demonstrates both a technical mastery and an inventive delight in linking human emotion to the natural surroundings.

I defend Hughes' right to expand his range of subjects and to experiment in new treatments, and point out that all his contemporaries similarly modified their earlier styles. I reject the suggestion that he took to Genre painting to satisfy popular demand, and argue that his ideals are retained, through examples of Genre painting which are at least as interesting as those of others who used the Pre-Raphaelite manner.

I suggest that the alleged decline in his work is an inaccuracy which in large part has been due to inadequate knowledge of his painting. It is my view that the alleged deterioration in Hughes art after youth has become accepted as factual by reason of that judgment having gone unchallenged for so long. I suggest that reappraisal is now due, and that Arthur Hughes' works deserve to be studied with the same attention as those of other more famous artists of his century.

F O R W A R D

My immediate sympathy with Arthur Hughes' painting on exhibition at the Tate Gallery and at Birmingham stimulated me to see more of his work. I was most disappointed that little more was available for inspection, and that there was the generally accepted view that he was an artist whose effective career was brief, and that his good-quality productions were limited to the 1850s and early 1860s, after which he declined rapidly to dullness and pathetic weakness. I decided, however, to judge for myself. It seemed extraordinary that this artist should be capable of outstandingly imaginative illustrations during the same period.

When I discovered that very few examples of his later painting were available, I began to suspect that the dismissal of his later work from consideration might be due to embarrassing ignorance - a possibility which appeared to have confirmation when I was able to examine in private collections some paintings which dated well beyond the time when the respected critics approved. I then determined to carry out a study of his art.

It proved to be exceedingly difficult to obtain information about Hughes and to locate his productions

and I was not surprised to learn that several persons had previously abandoned initial efforts to write about Hughes painting on discovering how frustrating and excessively time-consuming was the project.

As Arthur Hughes' painting had received no serious study until my own research began (scarcely any historians other than John Gere and William Gaunt had expressed deep appreciation of his art) it was necessary for me to undertake the most fundamental inquiries to establish what work he had produced, and to attempt to locate and examine as much of it as possible.

The study of Hughes' work has been particularly difficult on account of the paucity of documentation (unlike other better known Pre-Raphaelite painters, astonishingly few letters and items of biographical or artistic nature have survived, and most of these are much too late to be of value in studying his relationship to other contemporaries, or to throw light upon his own development).

Fortunately, I began my investigations just in time to meet and converse at length on numerous occasions with very old people who knew Arthur Hughes well. The cumulative effect of the memories of his last surviving granddaughters, Miss C.N. Hale-White and Mrs. Durnford, Mrs. M.C.N. Munro, Helen Rossetti Angeli, Col. L.H. Trist

and Miss Maud Trist, Mrs. Ruth Leathart, Dr. Hale-White, Sir Sidney Cockerell, and several members of the Rae and Finch families, build up a description of the man and his art which substantially explains the very high regard which he won.

My investigations have convinced me that Hughes was far from being a passive unoriginal, momentarily enlivened by the brilliant creations of the better known Pre-Raphaelite artists; on the contrary, Arthur Hughes had a great deal which was personal to offer and this he expressed poetically in the course of a long lifetime's activity, and with much individuality of flavour.

The small place in measure of importance given to Hughes' art can in part be accounted for by the circumstances of his own modest claims for his work, and his being overshadowed by the more forceful personalities of his better-known Pre-Raphaelite friends, and the fact that few of his works were ever available for simultaneous viewing during the period of his maturity. There is no doubt in my mind that Hughes has often been relegated to a position of most modest accomplishment by those who had examined very little of the art which they claimed to evaluate.

I have attempted to examine and record by photography as much of Hughes painting as can be traced at the present time. I make no claim to comprehensiveness in respect of this study, for I regard my catalogue as a basic framework which will receive much expansion as more information becomes available.

I have been able to learn very little about Arthur Hughes family and equally little about his earliest years of boyhood so that there is no biographical material available to account for his fascination with Art. It seems that it is not now possible to reconstruct, even in outline, the circumstances of this period of his life. He did not write any recollections like Holman-Hunt, nor are there any archives of family papers - as in the case of the Rossetti family - nor were there any admiring relatives with literary desires, as in the case of Burne-Jones. If Hughes himself ever wrote of these years, as perhaps in a diary, there is no hope of recovering this information, because all his personal papers were destroyed shortly after his death.

The only source of knowledge in these matters is his family: today only two descendants who knew him are alive, his granddaughters, and they have given me such help as they can - regretting only that their own information is so limited. They have assured me that Hughes' father had no literary or artistic interests, but that he was completely absorbed in the management of his small estate. The family had

1. His daughter Emily, when she was obliged to leave the family home at Kew, destroyed all personal papers kept by her father and mother, together with mementoes, and the remaining sketches and unfinished works left in the studio.

At one time Malcolm Bell had the intention of writing about Hughes, but on approaching the family he was strongly, though very politely, discouraged. They acted out of respect for Hughes' life-long desire for privacy.

originally come from Wales, and were landed gentry of moderate means, but Arthur Hughes was born in London on the 27th January, 1832. He was clearly a spirited and determined youngster. He ran away from home to learn drawing when he met parental opposition to the scheme, and in the descriptive terms of a past generation he was regarded as a "sport".

It is certain that he was precocious and that his boyhood abilities developed more rapidly than could reasonably have been expected. A drawing of cows within a lush meadow made at the age of 12 may be regarded as evidence of his fluency. It survives by accident among papers owned by his friend Alexander Munro, the sculptor, and seems to be the only work produced during the years when he attended Archbishop Tenison's Grammar School.

It is much to be regretted that not only is there no art-work other than this single drawing from the days of his childhood, but that there is no biographical information nor documents of any sort which could inform us of his interests and environmental influences. The records of his grammar school were destroyed during the Second World War.

At the age of 14 Hughes was accepted at the School of Design at Somerset House, where he was "under Alfred Stephens" however, it is not known how much

instruction he received from him during his brief stay of a single year before winning a studentship to the Royal Academy Schools.

It can safely be assumed that Hughes' earliest experience at the Royal Academy Schools would be similar to that of his contemporaries: at first he would be fully occupied with the mastering of techniques of drawing, and learning Academic methods. He would be influenced primarily by his teachers and older fellow students, thereafter, principally by the approved Academic painters. We know he was enthusiastic and conscientious, so it may be assumed that he took advantage of the permanent exhibitions of Fine Art in and around London available to Art students, and that he would follow the Annual Exhibitions at the Royal Academy and the other professional societies. The work which Hughes is known to have produced after his acceptance at the Royal Academy supports the belief that his taste never inclined to the rhetoric of the grand Classical subjects, nor national history. He favoured quieter subjects even from boyhood: landscape was his first love, and it was soon to be allied with romantic narrative.

The Munro family possess a small oil-painting^{*} attributed to Arthur Hughes which is believed to have been produced around the age of 16. It is of a youth reclining on the ground, painted in the deliberately

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"mellowed tones" in vogue at the Academy circles of the time. In pose and handling there is a similarity to the little study for "The Young Poet" at Birmingham Art Gallery, which can be dated to near 1849.

There is evidence that Hughes in his first Academy painting was influenced by William Etty, as were many other students who found his later works easier to understand and imitate than other Academic heroes - easier than Turner in his later years, and more suitable for imitation than the almost equally respected Landseer. It is unlikely that Hughes enjoyed personal acquaintance with Etty as did Holman Hunt: Hughes would not have advanced soon enough to the Life School which Etty shared with the students until his retirement in the summer of 1848.

Hughes' essays into landscape would naturally be based upon that of established landscape painters. Linnell's approach seems to have guided him in the brief period before he became aware of the new manner of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Although confirmation of this opinion would require more evidence than is available, the one landscape which survives from this time, "Landscape with Gipsy Children Round a Fire",^x is strongly characterized by similarities to Linnell's handling of trees, shrubbery, and ground masses.

At the time of Hughes' entry into the Painting



"THE YOUNG POET"

1. Hughes would have seen Linnell's work from his earliest years at the Royal Academy. In 1847 Linnell showed two works with quotations from Thomson's "The Seasons":

"Mid-day" No. 245

"The Morning Walk" No. 265

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GAT. No. 5

School he would have lacked enough experience to undertake successful Narrative Painting, but he did follow with interest the work of his older contemporaries hung at the R.A. exhibitions. When in 1848 he saw Holman Hunt's "Eve of St. Agnes" he was sufficiently impressed to memorize the significant features of that composition which was to be matched by his own attempt at the subject a few Years later. Holman Hunt would probably have seemed somewhat remote to Hughes by reason of his comparative seniority in the Academy Schools, but the potential conditions for friendship existed: Hughes had, or cultivated not long after, enthusiasms common to Holman Hunt and Millais: Romantic poetry and a love of Shakespeare.

By the year 1849 Hughes had a considerable command over basic techniques and in the work he produces it is possible to see the foreshadowing of his later interests in things Poetical and Romantic. Hughes visual imagery was deeply stirred by poetry: he read much of it; he enjoyed the society of amateur and professional poets; and he frequently tried his hand at verse (usually humorous and often doggerel).

There is scarcely any information on Hughes' activities at the time of his first Academy paintings which allow us to follow his development with any degree of accuracy, we only know that he was an exceptional student, and that he won the Silver Medal for Antique

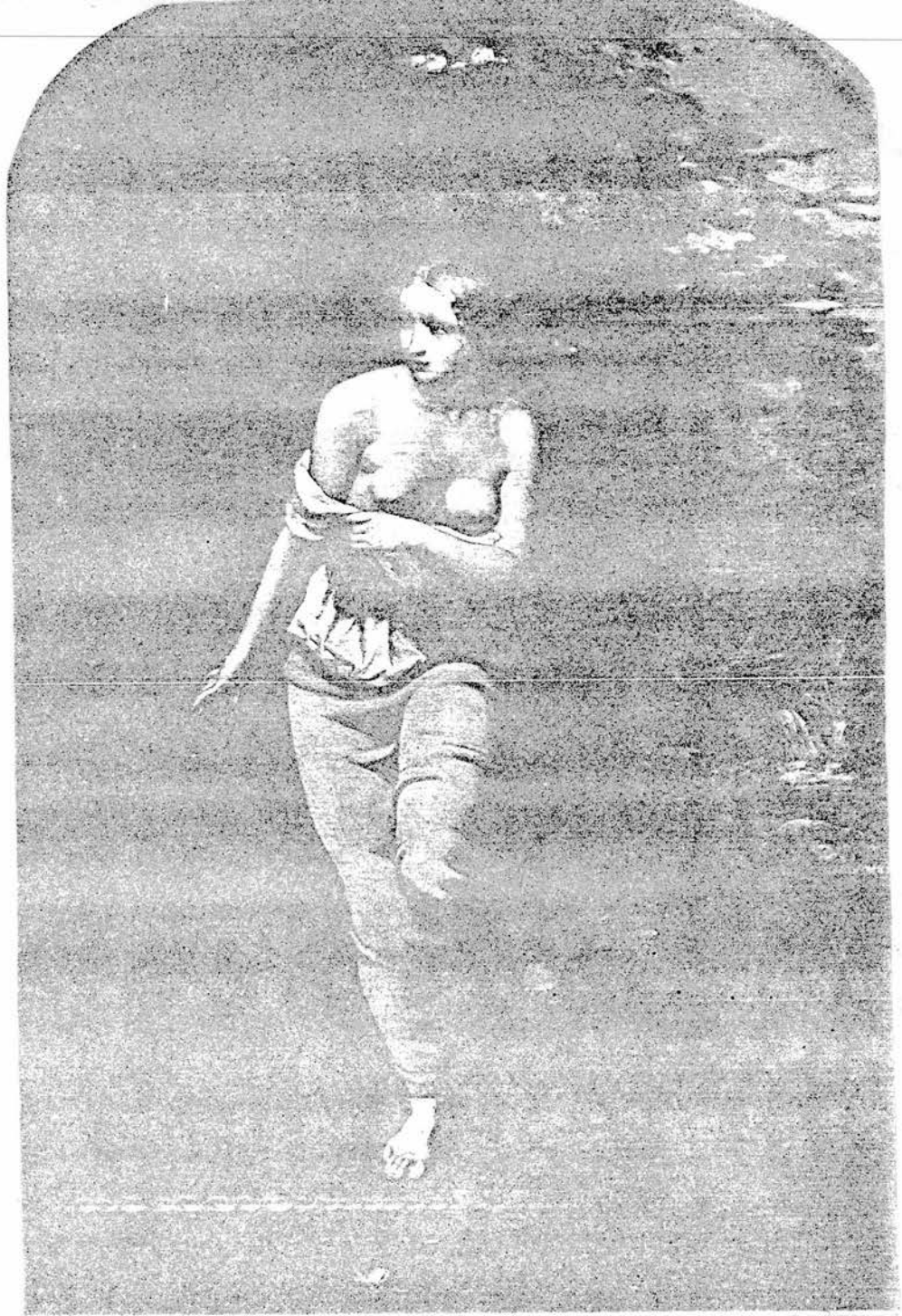


SELF PORTRAIT AT THE AGE OF
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Drawing in 1849.

Originality could scarcely be expected from Hughes in 1849. His first picture to be hung at the Royal Academy, "Musidora",¹ is deeply indebted to William Etty whose own "Musidora"² would have been known to Hughes in one of the several versions. The work can not be regarded as entirely satisfactory, yet the attempt was ambitious and daring. Unfortunately, it required a degree of experience and control of emotional expression not available to a boy of 17. The treatment is weighted with dutiful respect for the conventions of the Life Class, and the subdued colouring which at that period was so often associated with the recommended "Old Masters". The subject was inspired by James Thomson's blank verse poem "The Seasons", a source of numerous pictorial ideas for contemporary artists.³

Hughes, who was to concentrate much of his energy upon recording aspects of Nature's seasons, was understandably responsive to Thomson's poetry, and may well have been encouraged by the pictures illustrating episodes from "The Seasons" which were to be seen at the Royal Academy shows in the two preceding years (among which were two titled "Musidora"). Hughes' painting also serves to underline the substantial progress, in both technique and personal invention, which he was to make in the interval of three years before his



1. MUSIDORA 33 x 22 in

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City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham

2. ON NEXT PAGE

3. Between 1841 and 1849 there were 13 paintings and 4 sculptures with subjects drawn from Thomson's "The Seasons" available for view at the Royal Academy exhibitions.

next landscape and figure subject, "Ophelia."

In works of 1849 it is impossible to trace any influence from Rossetti, though Hughes doubtless visited the Free Exhibition at Hyde Park and saw Rossetti's "The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary". Nor was he influenced by Holman Hunt's Royal Academy picture of the that year, "Rienzi vowing to obtain justice for the death of his Brother". Hughes character was such that even in extreme youth his imagination was not inflamed by High Drama. Millais had more to offer in his "Isabella" at the same exhibition, where the treatment was obviously more Pre-Raphaelite than Holman Hunt's work, and the romantic subject was perfectly fitted by Keats for pictorial translation. Millais' precision in textural realism certainly influenced Hughes, but the results are not seen immediately: he was not technically ready, and Landscape exerted its overwhelming attractions. Possibly he was already working upon the gipsy subject where the principal influence appears to be from Linnell.

Hughes' "Landscape with Gipsy Children Round a Fire" can not be exactly dated in the absence of any documents. Circumstantial evidence indicates that it was substantially painted c 1850, although like many pictures which remained unsold with Hughes, it probably underwent some modifications at a later date.



MYSIDORA by ETTY

The first version is illustrated (1843) $25\frac{5}{8}$ x $19\frac{3}{4}$ in.

1. In 1968 I sent Mrs. Ruth Leathart a print of "Landscape with Gipsy Children Round a Fire" in the hope that she would recognize it as one of the paintings she had seen in the collection of her father-in-law, James Leathart. She was not able to do so, but I believe this was due largely to the unsatisfactory nature of the photograph and her poor sight in extreme old age.

The work was produced at a time before the Pre-Raphaelite ideals had affected his methods and subject-matter, and before romantic narrative had entered into his work. Painting when his personal style had not yet developed, he probably chose the subject because it was popular and allowed him to paint a landscape in a manner which he had been studying. The painting has some charm but is otherwise really undistinguished, and not at all like Hughes later work.

Throughout his formative years Hughes was particularly open to influence from other contemporary artists. He came into contact with a wealth of novel artistic suggestion at the most appropriate moments for him personally. He was a member of several societies connected with the Academy and its students. In 1848 he was a member of the Cyclographic Club² which included among its numbers Millais and Rossetti.

However, Hughes could not have benefited from any of Rossetti's ideas then, for he has put it on record that the portfolio never reached him, having been retained by Rossetti.

Although documentary evidence is not available it is probable that Hughes was working out his first elements of personal style during the two years before his showing of "Ophelia" in 1852. It is impossible now to reconstruct the various constituent influences, many of which were unconscious. Hughes at first seems to have had little

1. There were 28 Gipsy subjects hung at the Royal Academy between 1843 and 1852.
2. J.G. Millais, in "The Life of Sir John Everett Millais" (Methuen, 1899, Vol. 1, page 65) mentions receiving a letter from Arthur Hughes concerning his membership of the Cyclographic Club. J.G. Millais thought it was an error (and a confusion with the club organized by Lady Waterford) on account of a date given by Hughes. However, J.G. Millais had himself erred in the matter of dates. Arthur Hughes remembered the Pre-Raphaelite events of his youth clearly: I think that if he wrote he was a member of the Cyclographic Club this should be accepted.

contact with those youthful enthusiasts who in 1848 were formulating their ideals of Pre-Raphaelitism, but his own immature inclinations were substantially in sympathy with those of Holman Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti. Hughes was immensely impressed by "The Germ". He afterwards regarded the reading of this magazine as one of the watersheds of his life.

In July 1892 F.J. Stephens presented Hughes with a copy of the first issue of that nostalgic publication. Hughes replied in these words: "I am not conscious of any literature which has had such effect upon poor me as that first number, and I couldn't tell you how I love it. And to get it from you, too, who were yourself part of that "Germ!"

Hughes recalled the exact circumstances of his introduction to the magazine. In an unpublished typescript³ he wrote: "I was drawing in the Academy School one evening when a young sculptor, Alexander Munro, standing behind me had brought with him a slender pamphlet. It passed around from hand to hand eliciting shouts of laughter. In the end it came to me, and I saw the strangely interesting and pathetic etching² by Holman Hunt inside, and that quaint but inspiring sonnet on the cover, and I could^{only} wonder where the joke came in. William Rossetti's Sonnet goes:

1. F.J. Stephens papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

2. Lower area of Holman Hunt's etching for "My Beautiful Lady" 1849. This design from the Germ seems to have given Arthur Hughes the first idea for "The Mother's Grave" or "Sailor Boy", which later became "Home from Sea".



When who so merely hath a little thought
 will plainly think the thought which is in him,-
 Not imagining another's bright or dim,
 Not mangling with new words what others taught;
 When who so speaks, from having either sought
 Or only found, - will speak, not just to skim
 A shallow surface with words made and trim,
 But in that very speech the matter brought;
 Be not too keen to cry - "See this is all -
 A thing I might myself have thought as well,
 But would not say it, for it was not worth."
 Ask, "Is this truth," For it is still to tell
 That, be the theme a point or the whole earth,
 Truth is a circle, perfect, great or small.

Whatever else W.M. Rossetti may have to answer for, he will certainly have to answer for that. I know of one who thanked him for it." (

His reading of the "Germ" helped to clarify certain vague dissatisfactions which he was then beginning to feel. Despite his quiet and retiring nature Hughes was far from being a passive receiver of conventional ideas of the Academy Schools. He, too, was aware of a certain dullness and complacency among his fellow pupils and the exhibitors. Even at 18 he realized how foolish it was to perpetuate conventions which had long been emptied of their significance.

Although Hughes did not take part in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood activities, for he was never one of them, he was the person most sympathetic to their aims and ideals among any of the painters in training at the Academy. He really understood the nature of their protest. In old age he put it into words very clearly. "Their protest was startling, but I do not think it was a protest against the Academy

1. Typewritten address in possession of Mme. Bornand, Mogens, France. Arthur Hughes opened the Manchester 1911 exhibition "Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites" The address was in preparation for this ceremony.

and its training, but was engendered by the slackness they saw in the exhibitions and among the students about them. All were not men like Dyce and Leslie they felt impatient of conventionality that rather lowered Art to the artificial, and mannerisms that were stale and wanting in realism and not enough in touch with Nature."

Both direct and indirect evidence exists how deeply impressed he was by the Pre-Raphaelite display at the Royal Academy in May 1850. There was a brilliant exposition of technical ability in Millais' painting for him to admire, and Holman Hunt's "Christian Missionaries Escaping from the Druids" recommended itself to his own compassionate nature and quiet religiosity. Although it is not possible to show that his sympathies and approval resulted in imitation or parallel studies immediately, the Pre-Raphaelite painting guided him towards the development of a personal manner which was to be close in spirit to their own aims. He was especially fascinated by Millais' "Ferdinand and Ariel", and held this work in memory until he felt himself technically equipped to match his skill against Millais' with his own remarkably close version of the subject.

It is probable that the immediate effect of Hughes' study of the PRB paintings was not an attempt to match the sparkling brilliance of their colour, but a



1. Holman Hunt's "Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Priest from the Druids" $43\frac{3}{4}$ x $52\frac{1}{2}$ in. 1850. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

sharpening of his awareness of what could be observed in Nature, and a reinforcement of his tendency to seek out the mood and emotion potential in Shakespeare and his favourite poets.

1850 for Hughes was a year of assimilation of new experience in art, and he had nothing hung at that Academy exhibition. Only one small gouache survives from this year, an "Adoration of the Shepherds", which although charming in its vivacity, has nothing to offer in comment upon his artistic development other than proof of his continuing improvement in draughtsmanship.

From the year 1850 Hughes exhibits an increasing interest in Romantic themes: perhaps the best commentary is his own portrait of about this time where he paints himself as "The Young Poet".

It was in 1850 that Arthur Hughes met the girl who was to become his wife 5 years later. Tryphena Foord was 4 years older than Hughes. Her father is described on the marriage certificate as "Plumber", but in fact he was the manager of a firm of plumbing and building contractors at Maidstone. The circumstances under which he met her are not known. She was a person of similar temperament to Hughes, and has been characterized by several people who knew her as especially gentle and kind, refined and intelligent. Their marriage of 60 years duration was one of quite exceptional happiness. The quiet home life which they both enjoyed so much is



1. Unpublished photographs of Arthur Hughes and Tryphena Hughes

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reflected in the subject and treatment of Hughes' painting until the end of his life.

Dating also from 1850 is his friendship with Alexander Munro, the Scottish Sculptor from Inverness, who was engaged in the work of stonecarving under Sir Charles Barry at the new Houses of Parliament. Munro who improved himself by attending lectures and classes at the Royal Academy, was seven years older than Arthur Hughes, but the difference in their ages did not prevent them becoming close friends when they discovered that they shared the same tastes in Art, Literature, and outlook upon life. Munro was a poetic idealist who deeply longed to introduce a greater degree of refinement and loveliness into contemporary sculpture. His sensitivity of observation for the delicacy of childhood and its permanent record in marble was scarcely ever equalledⁱⁿ 19th century England.

Hughes and Munro were drawn together by their mutual sympathies with the Pre-Raphaelite ideas expressed in "The Germ". Theirs was a friendship which was to last as long as life, and was of immense importance in Arthur Hughes development as an artist. Largely through the patronage of Gladstone, who had been delighted with the results of his commission to carve in marble the model of the "Lady of Rimini" put on view at the "Great Exhibition" of 1851, Munro built up a successful practice as a free-lance sculptor. From 1851 he shared a studio



UNIDENTIFIED MARBLE BY MUNRO. PHOTO: MUNRO FAMILY

with Arthur Hughes at 6 Upper Belgrave Place, until 1858, when Hughes felt the dual pressures of the need for more houseroom for his family, and the attraction of the landscape near Maidstone where the scenery was most suitable for his landscapes.

Arthur Hughes comes to stature as a youthful professional painter while working in the constant company of Munro. The debt which he owed to Alexander Munro was very great indeed, and has not been appreciated up to the present time. Because their exchange of ideas was immediate and verbal, there are no records to chart the benefits given or received by the two young men. Although Alexander Munro's work has never been adequately studied and his sculpture is widely scattered and inaccessible, photographs and private memories conveyed to his descendants have convinced me that Munro exerted a decisive influence upon Hughes' lyrical style. As far as it is possible to compare compositions in paint and stone, it is true to say that they strived for the same purposes and with largely similar results. Both men produced work which refined away all harshness in life, an art emphasising youthful or childhood beauty which was distinguished by an exact balance between sentiment and excess of emotion.

Two works, produced before the obvious change of style seen in "Ophelia" at the Royal Academy in 1852, show an ability to produce a convincing individualized



MILLAIS "MARIANA"



"THE WOODSMAN'S DAUGHTER"

personality: the "Self Portrait", an oil at the age of 19, and the "Portrait of a Lady". In later life Hughes wrote that he enjoyed portraiture, but although competent he never won a patronage which would allow him to gratify his wish to have one portrait on view at the Royal Academy each year. The "Portrait of a Lady"⁺ has been painted with very great care and high finish. It probably represents Hughes first professional portrait commission, but unfortunately there are no clues which could help to identify the sitter. Arthur Hughes' granddaughter has averred that it does not represent any member of the family, nor is it (as I once believed) of his God-Mother, Miss Knight, who left to him the beautiful house of "Wandle Bank."

Hughes did not have any picture in the Royal Academy exhibition in 1851. Records are not available to show whether or not he submitted and was rejected, or more likely, that he had nothing suitable to offer at that time. It was a period of transition in his artistic development, when his increasing command of technique was allowing him to make some use of the inspiration and example of the PRB. If, as is likely, he was also experimenting with their style of landscape, his speed of execution would have been seriously slowed down. Once again the achievements of Millais in the 1851 Royal Academy exhibition, particularly "The Woodsman's Daughter" and "Mariana" would encourage Hughes to pursue

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a manner similar to their own. By the date of May 1852 Hughes had achieved a distinctive style of his own. His skill in the depiction of emotional involvement in "Ophelia" is as strong and convincing as that of the older PRB exhibitors.

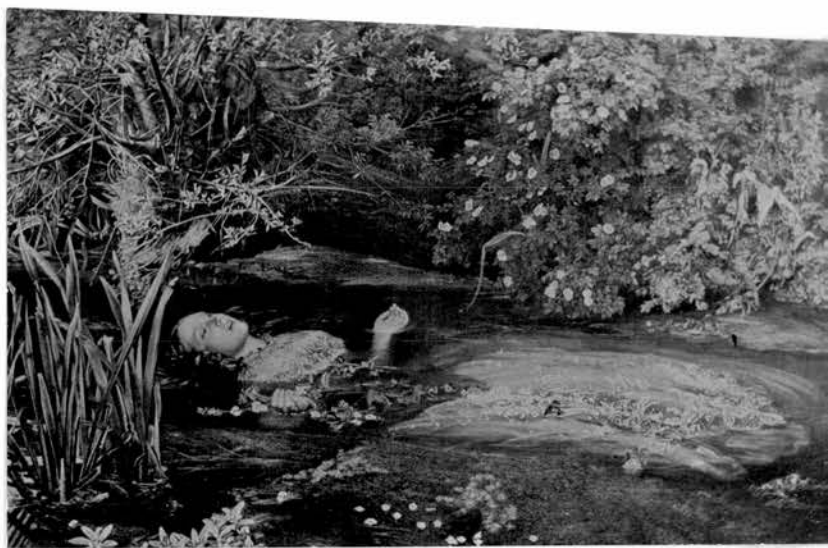
In 1852 Hughes "Ophelia"^x was accepted at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition; by coincidence,¹ there was a similar subject by Millais. Each was surprised that the other had taken the subject. But both young men read Shakespeare with pleasure, and they were at an age when the romantic pathos of Ophelia's story appealed strongly to them. Moreover, in addition to the narrative there was the challenge and opportunity of a natural landscape. While both works may be regarded as characteristic examples of Pre-Raphaelite painting, each emphasises a particular aspect of Pre-Raphaelite principles.

In choosing the same subject as Millais there might have been more than coincidence, there might have been a common idea and example. "Ophelia" was not a frequent subject at the Academy exhibitions. Between 1842 and 1851 there had been only four examples, two of them sculptures. However, in 1851 the subject had been seen at the Academy by both young men at an appropriate moment.

Millais' "Ophelia" is a display of astonishing technical expertise in youth. It is minutely detailed in an exhaustive manner, and curiously neglects serial



A.



B.

1. A letter by Arthur Hughes relating the circumstances of the coincidence is given in J.G. Millais' book, "The Life of Sir John Everett Millais", Methuen, 1899.

A. "Ophelia" by Arthur Hughes 27 x 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. 1852
Manchester City Art Gallery.

B. "Ophelia" by Millais 30 x 40 in. 1852. Tate Gallery

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perspective. It can be viewed as an extremely compressed botanical catalogue. It is painted with a hard precision of brushwork, with very little softening at the edges of form, and with relatively little blending of hues. The tonal contrasts are rather abrupt and the organization of composition has been relegated to a secondary place by comparison with the detailed description which obtrudes upon the eye. His jewel-like colour is fascinating, but the pictorial qualities of the subject have not been fully exploited. The emotion conveyed is unconvincing.

Seen beside this painting Hughes' version may be considered as an example of the subject interpreted through the mind and eye of a lyrical poet who did not allow technique to intrude upon the spirit of his composition. The pathos of Ophelia's plight is treated by Hughes with great restraint and his landscape is keyed to the overwrought emotional state of the girl, and he skilfully employs a high-key colouring to maintain the mood. He has chosen to paint the scene by night, not the brilliance of mid-day sun light in Millais' work. Hughes does not attempt to make a literal record of moonlight as Holman Hunt did, but he does materially alter the quality of the light which illuminates the scene. His composition is very much better balanced than Millais', and it is possible to say that he is taking a delight in landscape rather than a delight in plant life for its own sake.

Even at this early stage of his career, Hughes was

showing his characteristic approach to landscape: the desire to evoke a mood consistent with the essential nature of his subject. As we often find in his later paintings there is a special pleasure taken in studying the surfaces of trees: here the bark is recorded with multiple small areas of hues and contrasts of texture. He generally chooses a low viewpoint and frequently inclines a tree-trunk to an appropriate position for his figure subject. Often, as here, he locates figures by the river bank amid a lushness of greenery. This *Ophelia* of 1852 is finely balanced in sentiment and admirably skilled in accomplishment. It is scarcely surprising that the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood honestly admired it and congratulated Hughes on his success.

At this time Hughes looked with particular interest upon Millais' painting; however, it was not in landscape that Hughes showed the influence of Millais, but in the depiction of fabrics and the handling of glazes and the choice of colour schemes. The other Pre-Raphaelites now realized that Hughes was an associate though not strictly-speaking a Member of the Brotherhood, and that he had won this position by giving proof of his prowess and sincerity.

While it can not be certainly known, there is some reason to believe that Hughes from this time imitated the slow and over-painstaking methods of

the active Pre-Raphaelite Brothers. He had never had the quickness of Millais, and a tendency for severe personal criticism did lower his speed of execution. After "Ophelia" he worked longer than formerly on each picture, and his delays in production became inconveniently long. Following this work, he began another Shakespearian subject, "Orlando and Rosalind" which included another carefully observed natural landscape. His conscientiousness was such that he spent most of the year upon it, but was unable to bring it to a conclusion in time for the annual exhibition. Instead, he sent a "Portrait".

Because of the absence of measurements in the old Academy catalogues it is not possible to be sure which was the R.A. "Portrait" of 1853. But an informed guess may be made; as Hughes had nothing ready and wished to keep his name before the public, he would very probably submit his best work to date which had not yet been viewed by those other than friends. This was the "Portrait of a Lady" of 1851. If it was shown at this exhibition, it was also quite likely that he repainted it in part, taking advantage of his improved technique in the interval. A comparison with other works immediately before and after 1851 suggest that this is the case - the standard of craftsmanship appears unbelievably high for a boy of 19.

Hughes was now mixing more freely with the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He was painted by Millais as the cavalier in "The Proscribed Royalist" hung at the Royal Academy in 1853. Hughes must have learned a good deal about Millais' methods and ideals, and those of the other PR Brethren during those sittings. Hughes has related something of those discussions on Pre-Raphaelite matters in a letter ^{of} reminiscence to Millais' son. Hughes borrowings from Millais' "The Proscribed Royalist" are evident in Hughes' "April Love", particularly the head and shoulders of the man within an enclosed space in relation to the contraposto position of the girl.

At this time Hughes also visited Rossetti in his rooms, and occasionally painted beside him. At intervals the strong influence of Rossetti may be seen, but Hughes had sufficient individuality of character to resist the danger of being overwhelmed by the rich flow of Rossetti's romantic whimsicalities.

Almost certainly by 1854 Hughes was sufficiently close to the PRB to know what each of the exhibiting Brothers had in preparation. The circumstances suggest that Hughes took part in some of the discussion with Holman Hunt and his friends concerning the suitability of modern moral subjects in poetry and art.² Hughes had nothing at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1854. Either his "Fair Rosamund" was not finished in time for

1. J.G. Millais' "The Life of Sir John Everett Millais", Methuen, 1899, pages 172-7.

2. Holman Hunt was to show "The Awakened Conscience" at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition of 1854, and Rossetti's "Found" had been begun. Hughes' subject, though not set in modern times, concerned itself with a woman of low morals and her subsequent misfortune.

it because of his increasing degree of self-criticism offered obstacles, and he felt towards May that it was not representative of his best work, or it was submitted and was rejected. The picture was hung at the Winter Exhibition of the Pall Mall Gallery. It is a work on which there has been much more attention paid to the floral display than to the two figures. The imbalance of finish, particularly with regard to Rosamund's face, detracts considerably from the appearance.

Near in time of execution is the extremely interesting ^x"Ferdinand and Ariel".¹ It was certainly painted in deliberate emulation of Millais.² In my opinion, the balance of merit lies again with Hughes. He does not clutter his landscape with an accumulation of light-stealing vegetation, but contents himself with one mass of Ivy leaves at the side of the picture and a few flowers and the richly painted tree trunk in the middle distance. Unlike Millais he does not isolate Ferdinand from his landscape by over-brilliance of colour, and he avoids unnecessarily forceful colour effects like the clash of the red doublet against the ^oever-saturated greens. Hughes contents himself with Autumnal colours, painting with great subtleness the orange-brown of the sleeves and soft greys of the trousers. The subject was painted from Alexander Munro whose family have treasured it ever since.



1. "Ferdinand and Ariel" by Arthur Hughes $15\frac{1}{2}$ x $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. c 1854
2. "Ferdinand and Ariel" by Millais $25\frac{1}{2}$ x 20 in. 1849

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Through Rossetti Hughes was introduced to Allingham and was subsequently commissioned to produce illustrations for his "Music Master" jointly with Rossetti in 1854. Hughes liked the exercise of the draughtsmanship involved, and was happy to receive the small fees, for as usual he was short of money. He was nervous about Allingham's reaction to his inventions - fortunately Allingham appreciated the merit of the illustrations, as did Rossetti, who produced his own very fine "Maids of Elfinmere". Writing from Ballyshannon in July, 1855¹ Allingham was more than satisfied: "about our volume, I think we look very well'. Don't you? Most people agree with me in praising you most for "The Fairies" and for "Milly Listening". Frederic Stevens, later to become the art critic to the "Athenaeum", who was seldom lavish in praise, wrote to Allingham² "What a jewel that little woodcut by A.H. to "The Fairies" is! It is worth all his others."

In these drawings for "The Music Master" Hughes showed himself to be eminently suited to literary illustration. He was sympathetic to the finer subtleties of the author's feelings and he was fluent in invention and anxious to please. He was prepared to suppress his own inclinations if these conflicted with the brief given to him - quite unlike Rossetti who desired only to undertake what pleased him personally.

1. "Letters to William Allingham" edited by H. Allingham
and E. Baumer Williams, Longmans, 1911. Page 60.

2. 24th June, 1855. As above, page 266.

For this reason it is surprising that Hughes did not get more of this type of illustrative work during these early years of his career.

A work upon which Hughes lavished much attention was his "Orlando". This picture was in progress as early as April 1853 when the background was being painted at Burnham Beeches.¹ By August 1854 he was still painting elements of the background: wild roses. In common with the PRB's frequent practice, his source was Shakespeare, and the subject was frustrated young love - a theme which was to be retained during the picture's subsequent modification. Unfortunately, the Royal Academy selection committee of 1855 rejected Hughes' Orlando. He then began the alterations to the figures and the foreground, and by stages the work was converted into "The Long Engagement".

Hughes would doubtless liked to have had his "April Love" ready for the Summer Exhibition at the Academy in 1855 but was not able to manage. It was completed later in the year and Ford Maddox Brown recorded in his diary that he viewed it and appreciated its beauty on 8th September when he visited Munro's rooms.

Also rejected by the Academy selection committee was his Portrait of E.R. Hughes, his nephew, as a child in a nightgown.² It is an informal domestic study, and perhaps an inappropriate choice when his last remembered work was

1. "Letters to William Allingham" edited by H. Allingham and E. Baumer Williams, Longmans, 1911. Page 51

2. Portrait of E.R. Hughes as a Child in a Nightgown 1855
22 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge



"Ophelia". Although competently handled and a pleasing portrait, the appearance is somewhat disappointing, for the nightgown is almost a monotone with just a suggestion of colour-cast. Nevertheless, Hughes thought it worthy of exhibition in America, and included it amongst the works he sent to the Exhibition of British Art which was shown in various cities of America in 1857.

Alexander Munro, in a letter of May 1855 writes that "Hughes had nothing at the Royal Academy this year nor last year Hughes and Try are billing and cooing as of old - hoping to get married when he sells or completes his pictures." Hughes was interested to dispose, as quickly as possible a work he had in progress, which later was "April Love" but then was identified by the title suggested by Allingham "Hide and Seek". At some time during the year the composition was finalized as the subject of "April Love" having reference to Tennyson's poem "The Miller's Daughter".

Hughes showed it to Ruskin who was delighted and agreed to try to interest his father in its purchase. We know from Hughes' undated letter of 1855 to Allingham that: ... "Ruskin brought his father to try to induce him to purchase it, but alas Fate ruled otherwise, altho' the old gentleman's enthusiasm equalled if not surpassed Ruskin Junior, I believe." After an interval Ruskin wrote: "I ought to have written to you

1. In the possession of the Munro family
2. Letter in the possession of the Trist family

before but was not quite sure about my father's mind. I find, however, that he would probably be more struck by some of your watercolour drawings, as his taste is a little still bent to the old school. I hope, therefore, one day to possess some of your works, but must wait a little as I find Rossetti is happier in drawing for me than for dealers and I want to make him more cheerful and orderly if I can, and if the drawings were not for me I could not scold him about them, ... With best wishes and sincere congratulations on your picture which I think exquisite - more so at second sight than first".

Allingham was disgusted to learn of this. He wrote to Hughes: "Why then didn't Ruskin buy your girl? Not to buy is proposterous in a rich enthusiastic man. Why not, on your part (since you are modest) propose to take his bill at four months?"

In May 1855 Hughes sent his painting "Spring Is Come" to the Patriotic Exhibition, a show mostly of amateur work, organized to raise money for widows and orphans caused by the Crimean War. The composition depicted a soldier invalided from the war with the loss of an arm being reunited with his wife and child. The title is from a poem of that name ^{by} of William Allingham.

At the Winter Exhibition of the Pall Mall Gallery, 1855, Hughes showed his "Portrait of E.R. Hughes as a Child in a Nightgown" but it was then catalogued as

1. "Letters to William Allingham" page 63

No. 349 "A Closer Link betwixt us and the crowning race"¹.

Hughes picture "April Love"^x was offered to the Royal Academy in 1856 and accepted, but badly hung. In his "Academy Notes" for 1856 Ruskin gave the work his warmest approval: "Exquisite in every way: Lovely in colour, most subtle in the quivering expression of the lips and sweetness of the tender face, shaken, like a leaf by the winds upon its dew, and hesitating back into peace. A second very disgraceful piece of bad placing - the thrusting this picture aside!"

While it is undoubtedly true that the painting does justify the regard in which it has long been held by the public and Hughes' admirers, it is not quite without fault: once again the face is slightly disappointing in its soft rather indecisive characterization. It is much reworked. The girl's gown is painted with a wonderful assurance of technique and it is possible to see how he has benefited from examining the work of Millais. He has lavished attention upon the textures of the Ivy leaves and the small symbolic details of the scattered petals dropped to the stone floor and the control of his lighting is exceptionally fine, with a measured balance between the deep shadows of the recesses and the strong light coming through the arched window. The pose is a gentle application of well-tried controposto arrangements learned at the Academy Schools. There is a degree of obscurity in the lover which may be due to some hasty

"April Love" 35 x 19½ in. 1855 Tate Gallery
The painting was purchased by William Morris while
still an undergraduate. Burne-Jones (who was
anxious to meet Hughes) brought his cheque.



1. The quotation is from Tennyson's "In Memoriam":

'And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
and act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race.'

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finishing, but the total effect is one of delightfully captured transient emotion of a highly refined nature. Hughes' colour harmony is admirable: the mauve of the long, gracefully folded gown is exactly the best hue to tell against the green of the Ivy leaves. The eye is encouraged to return to the beautiful fabric by the enclosing masses and to appreciate the subtlety of the mauve by unconscious reference to pinks of the petals below and the turquoise bands of the diaphenous stole.

"The Eve of St. Agnes" triptych was largely painted in 1855 and shown at the Royal Academy the following year. Like his work at the 1856 Royal Academy it was poetically inspired: on this occasion the title was taken from Keats' poem of the same name.

A study for the work is in the Reserve Collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. The finished picture which is now at the Tate Gallery, differs considerably from the half-size study in the centre and left panels. No doubt Hughes was fulfilling a long-held resolution to match Holman-Hunts' conception of the subject which he had admired so much in 1848.

By this time, however, he had little to learn from Holman Hunt and his interpretation is quite without the awkwardness present in that earlier painting. Compared with the study, the central panel of the finished work has been considerably improved by



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"The Eve of St. Agnes" by Arthur Hughes. Centre $25\frac{3}{4}$ x 2
Sides $23\frac{1}{4}$ x $11\frac{3}{4}$ in. Tate Gallery AND ASMOLEAN MUSEUM (VERS

tightening up the composition, and placing Porphyro between the viewer and the bed, and giving prominence to the colourful stained glass window. In the left panel Porphyro is seen approaching the castle whereas in the study he is actually at the door.

It is most interesting to see how Hughes benefits by his critical approach to the original study, which had in the central panel a sense of gloom and weight resulting from heavy drapery and deep shadow. A comparison of the two versions of the right panel makes plain the improvement in the final painting. Cumulatively, the small changes in the position of the sleeping figure and the removal of the obtrusive background, and the brightening of colour is highly effective. While it is true that there are small areas which have a lack of finish, as Ruskin pointed out, these do not materially detract from the beauty of the work. The repainting of the left-hand panel is of great interest, and once again shows Hughes' powers of critical judgement. The placing of Porphyro at some little distance from the doorway allows a portion of moonlight landscape to appear and sets the atmosphere for the Romantic episode. It is a truly poetic work inspired by a deep appreciation of Keats literary imagery.

Ruskin in his "Academy Notes" for 1856 had certain



"The Eve of St. Agnes", 1863, by Millais, is quite unpoetic by comparison with Arthur Hughes' vision.

reservations about the blue glazing used to give the impression of evening, but he did realize the extreme difficulty of suggesting that illumination, and he modified his severity. He fully appreciated the poetic spirit of the work and ended his passage with the words: "There is promise in it of high excellence". In the painting Hughes has followed closely the poem without allowing himself to become ensnared by the detailed description. The atmosphere of youthful romance has seldom been so poignantly illustrated. Technically, it is an extremely difficult exercise which has been successfully handled, and few people today would be inclined to object to the compromises adopted to convey the evening light. Once again Hughes displays a refined and discriminating selection in hue and in the balance and quantity of it. The Pre-Raphaelite mauves and greens are skilfully juxtaposed while there is restraint in the modley of stained-glass colour in the background.

Hughes must have been deeply disappointed when his submitted work for the Royal Academy exhibition of 1857 was rejected. He had been working upon the landscape background for it since the summer of the previous year, and it was another example of his painstakingly recorded beautiful natural scenes. The painting was "A Mother's Grave". It is almost

certain that this is the same panel which, with later additions, became "Home from Sea". In its original state it seems to have been a single-figure subject showing a boy grieving at his mother's grave. A pen and ink study of this subject at the Ashmolean Museum is inscribed on the verso as "Home from Sea, April 1857". John Gere has written very shrewdly on the relationship between this drawing and the finished painting.

The title "Home from Sea" and the date of April 1857 may well postdate the production of the drawing and have been given retrospectively when the oil painting of the same name was known. This suggestion seems to be supported by the fact that Hughes has commented upon the identification of his painting in a letter to William Rossetti dated the 18th August 1857 which was written after the work which had been rejected by the Royal Academy had been put on display at the semi-private June 1857 exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite art at Russell Place. This letter discusses the paintings which he proposes to ^eland for the American exhibition of British painting which was held in the Autumn of that year. He writes: "... Please design a title for "The Sailor Boy" - there is nothing on its frame. I called it "The Mother's Grave" at the Russell Place. I should like something different for

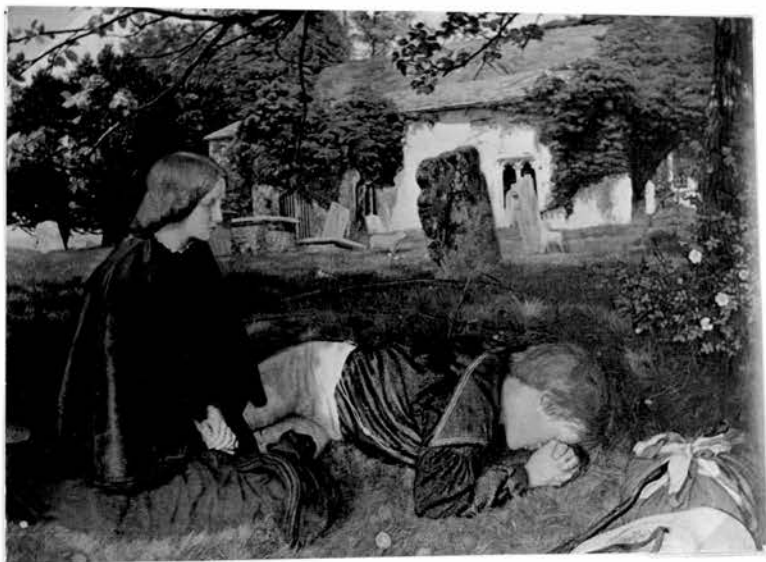


1. Pen and Ink drawing, study for "Mother's Grave" by Arthur Hughes, known as 'At The Grave', $4\frac{7}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ in. Inscribed on verso "April 1857". John Gere has suggested that the drawing was a composition study for the figure only, not the whole painting. ("Pre-Raphaelite Painters" by Robin Ironside and John Gere, Phaedon 1948.)

a change, but it is his mother's grave. That will do tho' quite well again, I think. Don't you?..."

Charles Bell recorded that Arthur Hughes told him that the background for "Home from Sea" was "painted from nature during the summer of 1856 in the old churchyard at Chingford, Essex." Hughes must have worked with great intensity upon the background, so it is unlikely that the selection committee found fault with that, but it may well be that they were dissatisfied by yet another rather hurriedly finished figure.

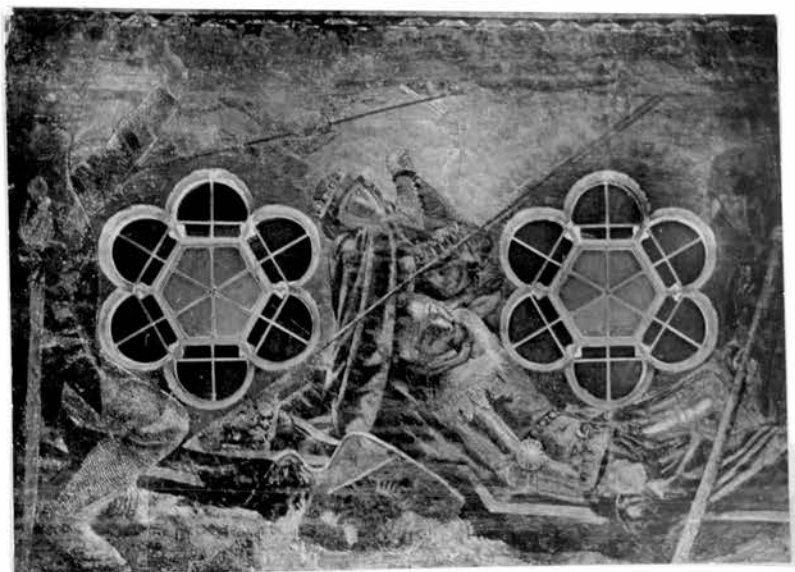
"Home From Sea" 20 x 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Signed 1863. Ashmolean Museum



1. Chingford Church was rebuilt in 1929.

So little documentation survives about Hughes' activities in the years 1855 to early 1857 that it is very difficult to establish with any certainty the circumstances under which he was influenced by other Pre-Raphaelite painters. However, from various references distributed amongst the correspondence of artists of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, it seems to be the case that for a comparatively brief space of time Hughes was frequently in the company of D.G. Rossetti, and treated by him as one of his intimate circle. There are references to Hughes painting in Rossetti's studio, requests that he should act as an intermediary for messages, and also that he should perform those multiple small services which Rossetti saw fit to impose upon his friends. Certainly it was through Hughes' acquaintance with Rossetti that he was invited to join in the project of the decoration of the walls of the Debating Hall at the Oxford Union building (now the Library) in the summer of 1857 - in cooperation with Burne-Jones, William Morris, Val Prinsep, Hungerford Pollen and Spenser-Stanhope.

In the techniques of his craft he was certainly the most expert of the group, but like the others he had no experience of mural painting, and because of inadequate preparation of surface and unsuitable medium, his design suffered the same fate as those of his colleagues. Hughes' subject, "The Death of Arthur" is today barely visible even with the most advantageous conditions of sunlight, for the thin distemper used upon the



"The Death of Arthur" Oxford Union Library.

1. In 1891 Arthur Hughes, writing to Alice Boyd commented: I looked in vain a year or two ago for the old Oxford Union pictures - utter blackness was all I found. It was madness to paint with two windows in the middle of the picture". (Penkill Castle letters, University of British Columbia.)

whitewash undersurface has sunk and flaked, and become covered with a thick layer of dust. From the evidence of the portions of surface which can be deciphered, and the records of the photographs made for Holman Hunt's commemorative volume¹ of 1906, it is clear that D.G. Rossetti's influence pervades his work as strongly as the other participants in the decoration. Because of the decayed condition of "The Death of Arthur" it is not possible to make any worthwhile comment upon the degree of success achieved by Hughes in the largest composition he was ever to undertake.

Also during the summer of 1857 Hughes joined in another cooperative Pre-Raphaelite venture, the small semi-private exhibition at Russell Place, Fitzwilliam Square, London. This was the first exhibition organized by the Pre-Raphaelite friends and associates. The idea of holding such an exhibition under their own auspices dated back for at least two years; Ford Madox Brown had recorded in his diary entry for the 21st July 1855² that there had been a meeting of Pre-Raphaelite artists (including Arthur Hughes) to discuss the possibility of exhibiting independently of the Royal Academy - an arrangement which would free them from the objectionable discrimination of the Selection Committee and the outrages of the Hanging Committee. In the two years which followed there had been a continuing increase of the number of artists won over to the new manner of painting, and most of them were dissatisfied with the exhibition facilities at the Academy. The summer of 1857 seemed an appropriate moment for a cooperative exposition of achievements in the novel modern style which might attract prospective patrons and picture-buyers.

1. Oxford Union Society: The Story of the Painting of the Pictures on the Walls and Decorations on the Ceiling of the Old Debating Hall. Oxford University Press 1906, Introduction by Holman Hunt.

2. William Rossetti, "Madox Brown -Some Letters, followed by a Diary" Hurst & Blackett, 1900.

The exhibition was "semi-private" in order that the exhibitors should not prejudice their opportunities to exhibit afterwards at the Royal Academy (the rules of which disqualified pictures which had been publically exhibited). The attendance was by invitation and recommendation. Of the 72 works which were shown, most were of modest size; D.G. Rossetti sent water-colours; Millais sent as part of his offering a portrait of Effy, when Mrs. Ruskin, (the "Foxglove"); Ford Madox Brown showed more ambitious productions including "The Last of England" and "Lear and Cordelia"; contributions from Brett, Inchebold, and others evidenced the sympathy felt with the detailed, vividly coloured natural landscape. Hughes showed six works which were fairly representative of the development of his personal style during the previous five years: "The Adoration of the Shepherds"; "Ophelia" of 1852; "The Mother's Grave"; the study for "Fair Rosamund"; the reduced replica of "April Love", and an unidentified "Portrait."

The critics in their reviews modified the harsh tone of former years and found some desirable qualities in the works at Russell Place, but none wrote with warm approval of what was distinctive at that Pre-Raphaelite show. Nevertheless, the experience gave the exhibitors some reason to expect a better reception abroad, where there was no established prejudice, and in the hope that their work might be assessed on its intrinsic merit, they proceeded with good spirits to make arrangements for the American exhibition to be held that autumn.

But the exhibition at the National Academy of Design,



1. "Fair Rosamund" 1854, $15\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{3}{4}$ in. by Arthur Hughes
2. "Fair Rosamund" 1861, by Rossetti. Rossetti offers no narrative, using the associations of the story only to 'flavour' his single subject study.

New York, did not realize the expectations of the exhibitors, the initial interest cooled quickly; the critics were unenthusiastic, the desired appreciation did not materialize, and the exhibition was not a commercial success. Few of the paintings which were for sale found purchasers. In part the outcome could be attributed to the fact that the Americans were disappointed to learn that the publicized paintings by Millais and Rossetti were not among the pictures displayed. Hughes had sent five¹ works. Among the reports sent to William Rossetti from America² I have found no financial reference to Hughes pictures, and it seems likely that none was available for sale. The American organizer, Captain Ruxton, had written that Hughes' "Sailor Boy" and "April Love" were 'immensely popular among my hangers.'³ Hughes' paintings were returned unsold but safe. Many of the other exhibitors were not so fortunate because on the return journey there was much damage by storm and salt-water.

Arthur Hughes was closest to Rossetti and his immediate circle of Pre-Raphaelite friends during the years 1857 to the early 1860s and the works which Hughes produces during this period are clearly marked by Rossetti's influence. Nevertheless, in my opinion it is an error to suppose that the medieval subjects which he produced during these years are simply the result of Rossetti's dominant personality imposing itself upon Hughes' pliable will. Hughes' parallel interests existed independently: he kept abreast of contemporary literature and his romantic imagination would strongly draw him to the Malory legends with their rich pictorial potential. Yet without doubt the pleasure of exchanging ideas with Rossetti,

1. "The Sailor Boy" (the title used in America for "A Mother's Grave"); "Ophelia" of 1852; the study for "Fair Rosamund"; the reduced replica from "April Love"; and "Two and a half Years Old" (which might have been the same work shown at Russell Place as "Portrait").

2. William Rossetti's papers, now at the University of British Columbia.

3. Quoted by Robert Ross in his Obituary Notice to Arthur Hughes, Burlington Magazine, January 1916.

and friends of mutual artistic sympathies, stimulated Hughes and encouraged his exploration of Arthurian subjects. In the course of a few years Hughes produced some very lovely works based upon medieval themes, including "The Knight of the Sun", "Arthur and Guinevere", "Elaine with the Armour of Lancelot", and "Enid and Geraint", subjects which were interspersed with his modern lyrical and domestic pictures.

The circumstances connected with Hughes' painting of "The Nativity" hung at the Royal Academy in 1858 are not known. It was the first religious work which he had painted since the youthful "Adoration of the Kings and Shepherds". Possibly he was encouraged to paint it by some interest taken in that work when it was shown at Russell Square. The Rossetti-like elements in "The Nativity" and its pendent, "The Annunciation" of the next year, suggest that he was impressed by Rossetti's more recent religious work and had seen his watercolours of "The Annunciation" and "Nativity" of 1855 (owned by J.P. Boyce and Ruskin, respectively). Hughes' interpretation of "The Nativity" is a highly personal one, characterized by extreme delicacy and tenderness, admirably in keeping with the maternal ministrations which he chose to depict. The atmosphere created is all benevolence, serenity, and humanity. Some borrowings from Rossetti can be seen in the angels' long folded wings of divided feathers reaching to the straw of the manger floor, being close to his angels in the pen and ink drawing of "Sir Galahad receiving the Sanc Grail" intended for the Oxford frescoes.

"The Nativity" received Ruskin's warmest approval when exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1858. He saw in it an example



"The Nativity" $22\frac{5}{8}$ x $13\frac{1}{4}$ in. 1858. Birmingham City Art Gallery.

1. "Notes on some of the Principal Pictures exhibited in the rooms of the Royal Academy" 1858, John Ruskin. p. 22.

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of potential excellence slightly flawed by weakness in some passages, and he recorded that he knew that it was hastily finished. Ruskin was deeply impressed by the handling of colour which is indeed admirable in its unusual mixture of mauves, purples, and pinks blended with charming smoothness. Particularly delightful is the warm light of the lantern thrown upon the drapery of the three figures in an enchantingly delicate manner, and his control of the subtly applied glazes is as apparent in this work as in "The Eve of St. Agnes."

Hughes' "Annunciation"^x is a pendant to "The Nativity" and is equally charged with Rossetti's influence. It is not quite as successful as the earlier work, in part by reason of the forced spirituality which he has attempted to convey by an excessively light tonality. The ambiguity of solid shapes, together with the uncompromising verticality of the figures and the intervening tree produces an effect less pleasing than the well-organized composition of "The Nativity". There are peculiar proportions in the figure and a rather unsatisfactory passage in the painting of Gabriel's face which is blurred and indecisive in the manner of a number of other disappointing faces which can be found from time to time in Hughes' work. The painting, though marred in some degree on both technical and aesthetic deficiencies, has, nevertheless, the elegance and refinement characteristic of Hughes' art.

Ruskin in his "Academy Notes" for 1858 had referred to Hughes having a "King's Garden" completed and wondered why it had not been sent to the exhibition. ^F Ruskin was frequently



ORCHARD
"The King's ~~garden~~" 11 x 11½ in. Fitzwilliam Museum.

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impetuous in expressing his petulant commands and probably did not inquire whether or not Hughes had attempted to show his picture which may well have been rejected by the Academy selection committee. But the work he named was almost certainly the same painting as "The King's Orchard" which was so popular when hung the next year, and regarded by Hughes as one of the best pictures which he had done up to that time - an opinion concurred in by such an impartial critic as William Rossetti.) In his "Academy Notes" for 1859 Ruskin included a paragraph of comment on "The King's Orchard", a mixture of patronizing approval and superior advice. Two years before he had called for carefully studied blossom from the Academy exhibitors, and in "The King's Orchard" he found the quality of Hughes' botanical rendering up to his required standard. 1

The work has vanished into a private collection and today we can only gain some idea of its quality from a small version² inscribed "Finished Study" in Hughes writing^x. However it is full of awkwardness, and I am inclined to believe that it was a sketch for the Academy painting which was reworked on one of the numerous occasions when Hughes was desperately short of money, and was obliged to produce as rapidly as possible some work which was saleable. John Hamilton Trist's manuscript catalogue records that he bought the painting in 1863 from Arthur Hughes at a price of £25³

In 1859 Hughes finally managed to bring to a conclusion the work which he had begun in 1853 as "Orlando in the Forest of Arden" and from which he had wiped out the figures before completio



"THE ANNUNCIATION"

1. Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery

1. He had been a good deal less satisfied with Millais' "Apple Blossom" ("Spring") which he had dismissed with the words: "...This fierce and rigid orchard, - this angry blooming - petals, as it were, of japanned brass."
(Notes on some of the Principal Pictures exhibited in the rooms of the Royal Academy", 1859, John Ruskin. Page 11.

2. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

3. A letter in the possession of the Trist family, dated 23rd March, 1863 accompanies a receipt for £25.

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It had now become the "Long Engagement"^x. In conception and execution it is undoubtedly one of Hughes' most beautiful works, and it summarizes all that is most individual and distinctive in his art. It combines carefully observed Nature with a poignant human situation, and is sensitively painted with an exact balance of sentiment. In my opinion it is an error to regard this work as sentimental, for that implies an excessive display of emotion inappropriate to the circumstances. The painting is the result of much personal, deeply felt emotion, and like many of Hughes' paintings is the result of personal sympathies with particular human situations. Before marriage, he himself had been engaged for many years, with his fiancée and himself pining for the opportunity of marriage, but restrained by absence of financial means. The poor curate's dilemma was very real to Hughes, and the work is a most subtle record of sympathetic awareness. It is a curious fact that Ruskin, who could have commented so observantly on this picture, did not do so in his "Academy Notes".

Hughes tended to repeat from one painting to another, models, attitudes and expressions, and motifs, yet such is his skill in the integration of these into various compositions that their recurrence is not obtrusive to the viewer. The curate's fiancée is painted from Tryphena, and this portrait, together with that in "Home from Sea", constitute the best painted likenesses that we have of her. She represented for Hughes the ultimate feminine beauty, and was the inspiration of so many of his female figures. The appearance



THE LONG ENGAGEMENT

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AN ADDRESS WHICH HUGHES WROTE ON THE CANVAS
WOULD SEEM TO BE THAT OF A STORE HE USED.

of the name Amy carved on the tree trunk (and in several other subjects by Hughes) has given rise to much speculation. The name was a favourite one with Hughes and was that which came most readily to him by association with affection, other than the reserved Tryphena. Amy was the name of his beloved Godmother who befriended him so well, and there is good reason to suppose that Amy was also his Mother's name. It was the name he gave to his first daughter.

The extraordinary high degree of finish in "The Long Engagement" is in part due to the fact that the landscape had been largely painted in the earlier 1850s when he had deliberately emulated Millais' virtuoso performance. When the figures were replaced he maintained the same standard of textural description for consistency between the figures and the background. The landscape portion is not simply a catalogue of detail, it is a selection thoughtfully included. He allows the eye to progress to various planes of recession by a controlled application of aerial perspective. It can freely travel from the ivy-covered trunk in the foreground, past the figure group to the woodland beyond.

The colour is admirable and applied without exaggeration at either end of the spectrum, as is so often the case in Millais' performances. The girl's fair hair is viewed to perfection against the foil of the curate's dark clothes, and the pinks and greens of the foliage around her are subtly chosen to harmonize with the broken hues of her garments. It is a work in which the intensity of the surface treatment is exactly matched by the intensity of the emotional feeling expressed.

Tennyson's poetry, like Keats, served as an inspiration and a source of subjects for Hughes, his interest was further stimulated in 1857 with the publication of the "Morte de Arthur" that work so welcome to the excitable imaginations of the young Pre-Raphaelite romantics. The few references to Tennyson which exist in Hughes correspondence make it clear that he had an affection for the man as well as his poetry -significant in Hughes' case, because his best work was always linked by association with affection.

"The Rift within the Lute"^k, a painting loosely connected with Tennyson's "Enid and Geraint", is a work which extended in production over a number of years, but was finished in time to be exhibited in 1862 at the Royal Academy. The catalogue gave a quotation from Vivien's song in plea for Merlin's trust, taken from "Merlin and Vivien":

"It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all."

Few artists of the time could match Hughes' ability to capture the fragile emotions of a young girl, and fewer could combine such a poetic record with a surpassingly beautiful vision of nature.

The clearing in the wood is seen from a low viewpoint and is of a type which he often repeated, being fascinated by the combination of the sloping tree and the pool of water by it. The reclining girl, lost in her daydream unheeding the horn of the approaching youth, is most tenderly painted.

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The composition is cleverly arranged; the picture area has been carefully divided by tone and hue within bounding trees, and the sunlight filtering through the leaf canopy mottles the undergrowth with various textures in the passage between the girl and the distant youth. Carefully regulated degrees in quality of outline provide endless fascination to the eye, and the colour is rich beyond description, yet quite without artificiality. The little triangular area on the left where the sky is reflected in the pool of water is a perfect example of Hughes' subtly modulated colour. Lyrical touches are introduced by careful placing of bluebells and other flowering plants which assist the romantic imagery.

Flowering plants which assist the romantic imagery.

The painting exists in two versions: the Academy

depicting picture, where the youth is shown beside the girl
 picture, where the youth is shown beside the girl, depicting

From one of the letters sent to John Hamilton Trist,

24th February, 1863, it is clear that Mr. Trist had

ary, 1863, it is clear that Mr. Trist had
 fication of the original design, and Hughes
 to comply, for he promises that the alter-
 y be made. Both works are so lovely and
 technical achievement, that it is difficult
 composition is preferable.

with which Hughes could integrate an imagin-
 gures within an emotionally-keyed landscape
 s handling of "The Knight of the Sun" which

This picture, which was never hung at the

love
 dated 24th Februa
 requested a modifi
 had been willing
 ation will shortl
 so excellent in t
 to decide which c

The fluency
 ative group of fi
 is revealed in hi
 dates from 1860.

1. Letter in the possession of the Trist family

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Royal Academy but went to Thomas Flint's choice collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings, has for its subject an aged, virtuous knight, whose heraldic symbol is the sun, being carried mortally wounded from the battlefield by his retainers. As the solemn procession moves through a rich woodland illuminated by the dying light, the old man clasps his hands in an attitude of prayer and contemplates his very last sunset, resigned to separation from all worldly things. The sentiment and the morality is aided by an inscription upon the frame:

"Better a death when work is done
Than earth's most favoured birth"

The faces of the principal figures are nobly characterized in Hughes' careful, detailed manner, and in the costume, too, there is a refinement of effect made possible by a sensitive choice of balanced hues. Although the tonality is deliberately somewhat darkened in keeping with the sombre mood, there is a brilliancy in the reds and highlighted reflections upon the armour which guarantees relief, symbolically and actually, from all sense of gloom.

To Hughes the work served as an opportunity to paint a beautiful evening scene at sunset - the most emotionally-charged hour of the day. With him the sunset is not an object of study in itself (unlike his one-time pupil, Albert Goodwin), but an indirect means to the creation of a mood, and he treated it with a poet's insight and sensitivity: in his works age and sadness are emphasized by the flow of the setting sun.

In "The Knight of the Sun" Hughes introduces the red of

1. From George McDonald's poem "Better Things" 1857.

the fading sun not only as a unifying colour-cast linking the figures, but he uses it as a compositional device whereby the aged knight is located between and below reddened areas of the sky and its reflections. Typically Hughes does choose a peaceful moment, for his art does not allow of the dramatic. By inclination he was gentle and tranquil, and he opted to paint scenes which were compatible with his temperament.

Close in time to "The Knight of the Sun" follow a number of other subjects of the medieval age charged with romantic associations. One of these is "La Belle dame sans Merci" where the theme is taken from Keats' poem of that name, a work which was completed in 1863 for the executors of Thomas Plint's estate. Hughes had hoped to exhibit it at the Royal Academy summer exhibition of that year^F - it was not hung there but at the Cosmopolitan Club. The picture was never one of Hughes' most admired works, which seems understandable on account of the compositional conflicts and the disturbing ambiguities which it is possible to observe even from the evidence of black and white photography.^F

Hughes illustrates with considerable faithfulness the literary description, locating the moment in time at stanza 6:

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend and sing
A Faery's song."

The close viewpoint of the knight and lady caused him some difficulty and he was not able to integrate the horse



"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" 60 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. 1863

and two figures in a pleasing manner. His intention must have been to balance the various curvatures in the foreground, but they do not flow rhythmically; moreover attention is drawn from the principal figures by the gesticulations of the background spirits. The emotional representation is unclear; the girl is not characterized with sufficient individuality - thus giving another unhappy example of descriptive weakness which Hughes could have avoided. The most satisfactory elements appear to be the passages with the knight's attire and the landscape rich in attractive woodland features particularized with Hughes' accustomed technical skill.

Also from 1863, on the evidence of Hughes' painted date, is the canvas which was offered for sale in 1950, ^{AS "ARTHUR and GUINEVERE"} a work which it has not been possible to locate but is believed to be owned by a Continental collector. The memories of those who examined it, concur in the estimation that it is a pleasing example of Hughes' sensitively observed romances, a suspended moment in time unemphasized in point of emotion. The colour and design were considered to be attractive, but not representative of Hughes' best work.

"The Guarded Bower" ⁺ though not exhibited until 1866 at the Royal Academy was painted somewhat earlier, as indicated by various references in Hughes' correspondence with James Leathart. ² It is a beautiful interpretation of Browning's words in the form of a costume piece recording a tender youthful attachment. There is sumptuous painting in the girl's gown and cloak and in the symbolic peacock and dove nearby,

1. "Apollo" November, 1950.

The work remained on the London market for some 18 months, then failing to find a purchaser, in this country, was transferred to the Paris office, of Messrs. Knoedler & Co.)

2. Letter in the possession of the Leathart family.

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while in the background there is a delightful extraction of woodland features lovingly detailed. The potential excellence of the work is unfortunately marred by the position of the gallant's sword which steals attention and disturbs the peaceful quality which is the first charm and the most endearing characteristic of these romantic medieval paintings.

Three single-figure pictures of day-dreaming girls are also dated to near the middle of the 1860s: "Elaine with the Armour of Launcelot", "The Singer", and "Madeline" - arch-topped compositions of almost exactly equal measurements. Because Hughes tended to make variations on a given subject, and because there is no documentation concerning the circumstances of production, it is impossible to say with certainty whether any or all of the three were intended to hang together. "Elaine" and "The Singer" were at one time owned by Mr. Pattison of Gateside. Of the three, "The Singer" is the least memorable, being painted in rather dull tones and brittle manner, lacking the delightful harmonies of colour present in the other two, and exhibiting a certain cramped awkwardness of composition due to the infilling of all marginal areas. Both "Madeline" and "Elaine" are tender studies of young femininity cherishing possessions. "Elaine with the Armour of Launcelot" contains much subtle painting in the textures and highlights of the armour, also in the fabrics, face, and hair. The handling emphasizes soft, smooth transitions of hue and form as if to carry the observer forward in sympathy towards the girl's



"Elaine with the armour of Lancelot" by Arthur Hughes
17 $\frac{2}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ c. 1865

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immaterial thoughts. "Madeline"^x wears the same costume as "Elsine" (though the model is different) and has a similar inclination of the head and pose of body within the picture area. She is a creation of charm, presented in the approved Pre-Raphaelite colours, and provided with an abundance of red-brown hair which flows over her neck and shoulders as she gazes at the coral necklace lovingly held above her casket.

A work which is remarkably close in appearance to Rossetti's paintings survives from near the same date, the one which was shown at the "Arthur Hughes Memorial Exhibition" of 1916 with the catalogue description "A Study for Marianna with Lute, c. 1865"^x. It is an oil on canvas which undoubtedly was painted from one of Rossetti's models. Marianna's head with its abundance of flowing hair is treated with a rich display of technical fluency, and the face follows the lush fleshy bloom found in Rossetti's female studies. The lower portion is only sketched in. To the best of my knowledge no other work by Hughes exists which is so near to Rossetti's personal vision, and, but for the fact that Hughes took care to authenticate it by his signature in monogram, † it would almost certainly have passed under Rossetti's name in modern times. Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate any reference which comments on the circumstances of its production or the unfinished state.

A work of medieval character which can be documented is

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1. The monogram is genuine and of the type which he used in the 1860s. Similarly, all the brushwork is indicative of Hughes' handling of the same period. When I first examined the painting in 1964, the name "Arthur Hughes" (in his own writing) was written lightly in pencil upon the unfinished portion of canvas on the right. This has subsequently been so badly rubbed that only an indistinct lettering can now be seen.

the Red Chalk, Indian Ink and Wash cartoon for stained glass, "Sir Tristram",¹ one of a series of designs narrating the legend of Sir Tristram and La Belle Iseult, commissioned by Walter Dunlop from William Morris and Company in 1862. (Hughes produced only one of the 15 designs, the others were by Rossetti, Val Prinsep, Burne-Jones, Maddox Brown, and Morris.) His design, unusually strong and vigorous, is constructed with careful regard for the principal locations of lead divisions, and the action is characteristically set within a forest clearing. Hughes depicts the moment when Queen Elizabeth of Lyones, aware of her imminent death, asks for the child just born to be christened Tristram, meaning 'Sorrowful Birth.'

It had originally been intended that Arthur Hughes would join William Morris' firm, but almost immediately after giving his agreement he asked to be allowed to withdraw. Arthur Hughes explained the position in a letter to J.W. Mackail¹ when he was preparing his biography of William Morris: "I was living far away in the country while the others were in town, and attending the meetings was inconvenient for me, and also I rather despaired of its establishment, and I wrote asking to be let go. Curiously, my letter was crossed by one from Morris asking me to make a design for a portion of a window, and another piece of jewellery-work. I did the drawing for the window, and it remains my only contribution."²

Because of his retiring nature and his desire to avoid publicity, there is very little known about Hughes private

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1. J.W. Mackail, "Life of William Morris", Longmans, 1899.

2. From 1858 he spent most of his life outside London, at Maidstone, Wansworth, Putney, Wallington, and Kew

activities. It is certain, however, that what he most enjoyed was the domestic circle of his own family. Hughes' love of children, and the convenience of having models ready to hand, stimulated him to undertake a number of childhood studies during the 1860s which I consider to be among his finest and most characteristic works. A very lovely example is "The Woodsman's Child" ^x which was originally purchased by his appreciative Northern patron, James Leathart, and is now at the Tate Gallery. The painting, which Hughes exhibited at the International Exhibition of 1862, depicts a sleeping child lying amid the flower-strewn rough grass of a woodland edge, quite unconscious of the small animals nearby. A low viewpoint has been taken and his attention has been lavished upon the richness of a small area of woodland from which he extracts the very essence of all natural life which is charming and beautiful to him personally. It is the vision of a specially sensitive observer where the subject could easily have been degraded to the level of sentimentality in a lesser artist, but he treats it with tender restraint. The colour scheme is largely dominated by the browns of earth and tree trunk, and the greens of wild grass, but in Hughes' typical manner it is enlivened with touches of colour located at critical points in the composition, such as the red ankle-socks and the Robin's breast, and the blue of the material pillowing the little girl's head. Unfortunately, at the present time the painting appears considerably darkened, neither through accumulation of surface contamination nor the effects of ageing varnish, but from some other cause. ^{EV}



"The Woodsman's Child" 24 x 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. 1860

1. I suspect that at some time the canvas was overheated during remounting.

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From Hughes own experience of family life came ideas for subject paintings of children, works which he produced with pleasure and a marvellous understanding of infantile psychology. In this category is the "Home from Work"¹ exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1861, one of a number of paintings in which he introduces figure types of honest rustic heroes common to moral fairy tale and legend. A woodcutter, returning from his work at dusk, is greeted at the doorstep of his cottage by a little child dressed for bed in a long nightgown. It is a tenderly observed spontaneous expression of family affection quite without any falseness or distortion of emotion, where the contrast between the father's strength and the child's fragility is effectively presented within a picturesque setting. The work, purchased by James Leathart, was much admired both in Hughes artistic circle and beyond. D.G. Rossetti in a letter to James Leathart² records how Mr. W. Heaton, the collector, had called upon him and discussed the Summer Academy exhibition of that year: "The first picture I happened to name was Hughes, whereupon he turned to his catalogue, and showed me that he had marked it 'Best'. I believe you will find many to congratulate you as its possessor." (At one time James Leathart also owned another canvas by Hughes which is a variation upon the same subject, "The Woodcutter's Daughter". It is highly probable that this is the work which is now at the Russell-Cotes Gallery at Bourmouth, catalogued as "Home from Work". The Bourmouth picture displays conflicting chronological elements, but it is almost certain that it was



"Home from Work" 40½ x 31 in. 1860-1

1. 19th May 1861. In the possession of the Leathart family.

substantially altered many years after the original design was conceived. Possibly, on account of damage or deterioration, such as fading from exposure to an excess of sunlight, Hughes had to repaint over the original design. Although the greater part of the brushwork indicates a date around the early 1890s, the atmosphere and figure style suggest a date of the early 1860s.)

One of the most attractive domestic scenes of these years is "Bed-time", now at the Harris Museum, Preston. Such subjects as a quiet evening scene within the home commended themselves to Hughes by reason of his own personality and he painted them with much understanding and sympathy. Here he affectionately observes the mother (who was modelled from his own wife, Tryphena) listening to her daughter's prayers in the cottage bedroom while the rest of the family sit drowsily in a living room warmed and illuminated by the flowing fire. In "Bed-time" the fading evening light which enters by the cottage window is reinforced by the firelight which casts a rosy illumination upon the father and two children. The atmosphere is of domestic tranquility and the simple satisfactions of humble life. In this work, and others of the '50s and '60s, Hughes shows himself to be the master of painting the less common forms of illumination, his technical expertise and his sensitivity to the poetic associations involved make his studies of moonlight, firelight, and lamplight memorable.

As a result of Lady Mander's publication of extracts from the correspondence of Miss Ellen Heaton of Leeds and D.G. Rossetti, Ruskin and Arthur Hughes in her article "The Tryst Unravelled" we



"Bedtime" 40 x 52 in. 1862



1. Lady Mander, "Apollo", March, 1964, "The Tryst Unravelling"

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know something of the circumstances connected with Arthur Hughes' two paintings of subjects taken from Mrs. Brownings poetry: "Aurora Leigh" ('The Tryst') and "That was a Piedmontese". Ruskin, who did not himself patronize Hughes, was willing to encourage others to purchase works and warmly recommended him as a suitable person to paint for Mrs. Heaton. Rossetti too, when contacted for Hughes' address, added his own persuasive opinion: "Among our yougest artists he is the one whose genius is beyond a doubt of the highest order."

The picture which Mrs. Heaton commissioned illustrated the moment when a youthful suitor's proposal was rejected, as described in Mrs. Browning's poem "Aurora Leigh". The painting was previously known as "The Tryst" but is more correctly described by the name used in correspondence between artist and patron - it was completed in 1860. "Aurora Leigh" is unfortunately somewhat disappointing, for the expressions and attitudes are incongruous with the subject-matter and the dramatic elements suggested by the poem are absent, and the two figures are unconvincingly represented with doll-like artificiality. In truth, Mrs. Heaton had grounds for complaint beyond her own expression, for there are curious effects like the foreground flowers and the trees beyond the couple being executed more fluently than the humans. But Mrs. Heaton's disappointment was less concerned with the execution than the obscurity of the emotion, and the substitution of a sea-green dress for the white given in the poem. Notwithstanding the deficiencies of the work, there is beauty too, particularly in the subtle

"Aurora Leigh" (The Tryst) 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. 1860 Upper

"That was a Piedmontese" 16 x 12 in. 1862 Lower



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1. "The Apollo" March, 1964, p. 221-3.



balancing of the hues and the foliage textures. Mrs. Heaton appreciated the colour sense in her artist and thereby earned Ruskin's superior nod of approval. He wrote: "I am very glad you like Hughes colour so much - it shows you have a noble and just perception of colour - which I hold to be the first quality in a judge of art: Hughes' colour is superb. Cannot you take other things of him that you like at present?"¹

Mrs. Heaton's second commission, completed in 1862, was an incident from Mrs. Browning's poem "A Court Lady": the death of a young Piedmontese, injured in the Risorgimento, as an elegantly dressed aristocratic young lady comes to his bedside.^x Mrs. Heaton was disappointed with Hughes' interpretation of the text, being less dramatic than her own, and she wrote of it to both Hughes and Ruskin. Hughes, in his answer, excuses himself with dignity: "...I don't like 'Fervid, impassioned exclamation', and I have an especial horror of all such pictures. I prefer the quieter moment that must have followed it, and which I feel I can be more successful in - for the very good reason I am less likely to failure - and my work likely to be intelligible without the book."² Ruskin would not hear of the complaint that the face of the court lady was not beautiful: "It is exquisitely beautiful in the face of the woman - a very perfect gem of its kind. I can not criticise it - I decline all criticism"...

Most people would agree with Ruskin concerning the court lady's face (she was painted from Hughes' wife): the failings

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1. "The Tryst Unravelled"
2. Same.

really lie elsewhere, particularly seen in the rather dull composition and the absence of emotional tension. There is some evidence of skimmed preparation, and I have the impression that neither "That was a Piedmontese" nor "Aurora Leigh" incorporate Hughes best efforts and full powers of composition. Of the two, the former is the more satisfactory in technical performance and there is much to admire in the brushwork lavished upon the lady's dress. Both works are rather thinly painted and unwished-for transparencies have occurred, detracting from their appearance. The modest fees which Hughes asked and received are documented in this correspondence where we learn that he received 30 guineas for "Aurora Leigh" and 35 guineas for "That was a Piedmontese".

In 1863 Arthur Hughes showed his "Home from Sea"^x at the Royal Academy Summer exhibition, this work which is now at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is almost certainly the same picture as that called "The Mother's Grave", but with the addition of the figure of a girl, the sailor boy's sister. Unfortunately, I have been unable to discover any record which relates to the history of the painting between its return to England at the end of the American exhibition of British painting in 1858, and its purchase by John Hamilton Trist in 1862.¹ It is quite possible that Hughes recovered the work from Thomas Plint's collection, because it was not among the works auctioned at Christie Manson & Woods in March, 1862, on the instruction of his executors. The painting bears Hughes' signature and "1862" which probably refers to the date of completion, but whether or

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1. Information from James Hamilton Trist's manuscript catalogue in possession of the Trist family.

not the additional figure was in position before Mr. Trist purchased it is a matter of doubt which the correspondence between Hughes and Trist does not resolve. Nor is there any oral record known to the Trist family.

"Home from Sea" is undoubtedly a Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece. In this picture there is no imbalance of finish either in landscape or figures, nor is there any note of falseness in the emotion portrayed. Hughes does not harrow the viewer; the girl is represented at a moment when her own extreme grief has passed, and the full intensity of the boy's misery is screened from the viewer. The pathos is heightened by the loneliness of the brother and sister within the warm spring landscape so faithfully recorded. The painting is so immediately attractive that it is easy to overlook the subtlety of professional technique and the poetic sensitivity which raise it far above the level of the many examples of Victorian "Mortality subject". There is symbolism both of the evanescence of life and of human hope, but that symbolism is rendered unemphatic and suggested through the pictorially appropriate inclusion of the thistle-down and the butterfly and the thriving spring flowers. Far from being in the least sentimental, as has sometimes been suggested, it is a work of great sincerity and one commenting upon human experience of the deepest significance. The tragedy of bereavement was near to Hughes at the time he finished this picture: his own infant child had died in 1862.

A beautiful example of Hughes portraiture located within

a picturesque setting is the "Mrs. Trist and Son" painted in 1863 while Arthur Hughes was on holiday with the Trist family, and presented as a gift to Mrs. Trist. The figure group is delightfully managed with a lovely combination of yellow, blue and purple, just sufficiently differentiated in stress from the surrounding woodland greens. A certain amount of artistic licence was taken with the flowers (displaced from their natural habitat to a more suitable location) and with the appearance of Mrs. Trist, who was benevolently idealized and presented as rather younger than in fact she was. Sixteen years later a pendant was made to it by Hughes in his portrait of Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Trist.

Hughes does not seem to have been abroad until 1863, when he travelled to Venice in the company of Alexander Munro, his closest friend, and artistic confidant. Since the year when they first met at the Academy Munro had achieved a degree of prosperity, largely through the popularity of his idealized groups of children portrayed in attitudes of domestic affection, and he had as many commissions as his declining health would allow. The fragmentary documentary evidence and the personal knowledge of his descendants makes clear the fact that he frequently relieved Hughes at times of pressing financial need. It is likely that their travel, which involved a circuitous route through Europe, was largely subsidized by Munro. It was almost to be expected that at Venice Hughes' innate gentleness, compassion and love of children should dispose him to fall under the spell of Giovanni Bellini. He wrote to James Leathart on the 15th May, 1863: "I think Bellini I shall remember with most pleasure of all, I seemed to know the others before, but the higher feeling of Bellini inspired me."

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The only artistic mementos which we have of that visit to Italy are the water-colour which he did of a "Portrait of Dante" now at the Brotherton Library. Leeds, and the watercolour sketch of a family upon a balcony at St. Mark's square, which gave him the idea for the picture of "Mrs. Leathart and Three Children" which was to be painted in 1864-5. Nevertheless, Hughes benefited much from this visit to Venice, and his habit of storing visual ideas and impressions served him well, and on his return his colour becomes even more sumptuous.

"The Music Party" is a richly decorative work redolent of the atmosphere he had absorbed at Venice. The aristocratic lady playing upon her lute for the pleasure of her husband and children has the serenity of expression and modesty of bearing which is reminiscent of the benevolently conceived ^aMadonna subjects of Giovanni Bellini which he had so admired. It is a composition of perfect balance, for here technical virtuosity in colour and brushwork do not intrude upon the reading of the scene. Texture and tone contribute to the variety of effects which cumulatively provide an atmosphere of visual splendour - in particular the heavily foliated tapestry of the background, and the velvet and satins in scarlet, green and purple delight the eye.

Louis Carroll, who had noted its progress at



"The Music Party" $22\frac{1}{2}$ x $29\frac{3}{4}$ in. 1864

1.

Attributed to Botticelli (or, by some scholars, to one of his assistants). The original painting being in the collection of Dr. Martin Bodmer, Geneva.

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Hughes studio was delighted to view the finished picture at the Royal Academy exhibition, and wrote: "I could find no pictures more beautiful than Arthur Hughes' "Music Party" though many were very beautiful."

Hughes' Venetian memories were to reappear in a group portrait of admirable quality produced for James Leathart. Though modest and by no means business-like Hughes occasionally took the initiative and tempted his patrons with suggestions for new compositions. In an undated letter in possession of the Leathart family, he wrote: "I enclose a little sketch of a family group I saw in an "entre-sol" in the St. Mark's piazza in Venice, I sketched it since then it has struck me that such an arrangement would admirably suit portraits, but then it would require a lady - there being two children with a lady. But perhaps you would not care for me to attempt painting Mrs. Leathart now that Rossetti has."

Mr. Leathart approved: the painting was carried out partly at Newcastle and partly in Hughes studio and was completed by February 1865. There can be no doubt that "Mrs. Leathart and Three Children" is one of Hughes' finest productions. The conception, the handling of the paint, and the absence of any flawing features mark this as an exceptional painting of the 1860s. Hughes having recommended the composition to his friend and patron, went to extreme pains to produce

1. Louis Carroll's diary, 17th May, 1864.

Watercolour sketch. 1863. 2 x 4 in. Leathart family.



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a painting which would please. The composition suggested in the sketch was reworked to a design having many refinements of organization. Hughes had brought back from Venice the gowns worn by two of the Leathart children in the picture (they reappear in several other works of the 60s) and he now adjusted the colour scheme against them. The apparently natural poses were calculated and tested, and the work of painting involved Hughes in many months of strenuous labour.

On the evidence of surviving sketches and the observation of those who saw him at work, Hughes was methodical in his techniques. After the first rough pencil design he would make a fair sketch in crayon which was afterwards worked upon the canvas. Some loss of vivacity might be expected from several preliminary stages, but in the case of "Mrs. Leathart and her Children" the effect is so natural that it leaves nothing to be desired. There is great richness of colour, texture, and finish, no area of the canvas has been skimmed, nor is there the slightest softening of line.

In this painting Hughes affection for children is manifested in the tenderness with which he observes their expressions and gestures. The family were delighted with the finished work and Hughes received one of the largest sums he had ever had from a patron -

Received of Jas Leathart Esq
Two hundred and fifty guineas
for group of Mrs Leathart & children
feeding pigeons

March 3rd 1866
Arthur Hanks



which was, nevertheless quite modest by comparison with many of his Pre-Raphaelite acquaintances.

Contemporary with the Leathart portrait is another of Thomas Woolmer's wife. She is pictured within Hughes' favourite woodland, alive with spring bluebells, a dainty and elegant figure possessed of ethereal charm with which he so frequently endows his feminine sitters.

Between 1863 and 1864 Hughes received payment, by instalments, of £210 from John Hamilton Trist¹ who had commissioned a work which was at first described as "Light from on High", but afterwards was known as "The Font"². The picture is of a small congregation at a village church during the singing of a hymn. The spring sunshine projects a coloured image from the stained-glass windows upon the stone flags where it is noticed by a group of little children, and a tired old man supporting himself on the side of the font. Here the figure of the aged rustic, dressed in his smock, is an outstanding example of Hughes' characterization, and serves to introduce an atmosphere of elegiac contemplation necessary for an appreciation of the contrast with the young children beguiled by the coloured patterns thrown below the font by the sunlight.^x

The strength of the painting lies in the convincing atmosphere rather than the passages of brilliant technical achievement. The viewer senses the benevolence

Information from various receipts given by Arthur Hughes to John Hamilton Trist for payments in multiples of £25 between June 1863 and April 1864.



"Mrs. Thomas Woolner" Exhibited at the Royal Academy 1866

- 2 "The Font" was shown at the Royal Academy in 1864 with two inscriptions:
- a) "Then by a Sunbeam I will climb to thee". George Herbert.
 - b) "An Age of Mysteries" Henry Vaughan.

The name "Sunbeam" was also applied to this picture by J.H. Trist.

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of the artist who looked so perceptively and so sympathetically upon the congregation. Like many of Hughes' works, it is uneven: there is admirable paintwork in the central figure, but it is difficult to understand how, on any grounds other than financial need, he could have parted with the work before improving the over-soft and vacant faces beyond the old man.

A work comparable in interest, and more even in quality, was hung at the Royal Academy beside "The Font": "Silver and Gold",^x which was also painted for John Hamilton Trist. It is another extremely sympathetic rendering of old age compared with youth, presented in an emotionally-keyed setting. Hughes is prodigal in the care and attention applied to the descriptive qualities of the two figures without allowing excessive detail to detract from tender sentiment. Hughes comment is aided by the unobtrusive symbolism of the scythe, sundial, and peacock. The only serious deficiency is found again in the face of the girl, which is flabby and lacks firmness and individuality.

The painting was much admired. ^FR. T. Palgrave voiced the considered opinion of the informed critics when he wrote of Hughes in his "Essays on Art"¹ one of our best poetical inventors within the range of idyllic art."

Another painting of 1863-4 is ⁺"The Lady with the Lilacs"² which was purchased by Lewis Carroll after he had seen it in progress at Hughes' studio and had been charmed by the youthful feminine subject and had bespoken

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1. F.T. Palgrave "Essays on Art", 1864. MacMillan.

2. "The Lady with the Lilacs" 1863 17 x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

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it. It must be regarded as an example of flawed beauty: although there are passages of very fine painting in the costume, hands and spray of lilac, the head is weak with much imprecision of form, and posed in affected imitation of Rossetti's manner. The eyes and mouth lack firmness of line and the expression is feeble.

Hughes' refined symbolism is beautifully exemplified in a painting known as "The Mower"^X. The conception is based upon a poem of Christina Rossetti, "Passing Away, saith the world, Passing Away"¹, dated 1860. The imagery of the scyther, and the children nearby and the church belfrey beyond, is neither overpointed nor too vague for significance. The painting can be appreciated as a pictorial composition while lending itself to a number of poetic interpretations. Hughes had no difficulty in selling this picture. In a letter to James Leathart he wrote:²

"After the private view at the R.A. Viscountess Clifton came to talk about "The Mower" and the Leathart portraits, and on the Monday evening wrote to buy "The Mower".

The period from the middle to the end of the 1860s was a busy one for Arthur Hughes. The internal evidence of the work points to a greater sureness in handling, with an increased rapidity of execution: there are fewer passages which suggest indecision or



"The Mower" 36 x 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. 1864

1. "Old and New Year Ditties" No. 3 1860

Passing away, saith the World, passing away;
Chances, beauty, and youth, sapped day by day:
Thy life never continueth in one stay.

2. 9th May 1865. In possession of the Leathart family.

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amendment of emphasis, and the brushwork is deliberately left obvious and thereby more expressive as it follows the moulding of curvatures of body and garments. During these years, in addition to some very sensitive portraits of women within his circle of friends, he is principally occupied in producing single-figure pictures of children and young girls. Examination of these works in comparison with those of the first years of the decade show that the richness of colour is maintained, but there is a gradual blurring of the sharp-edged detail which makes less precise the textural descriptions of his surfaces, though, in my opinion, they are not less attractive on account of that modification. Few of the faces now give grounds for complaint, and the finish of almost all the works is more even in quality.

The two small panels of "Mary Munro and Child" and her sister-in-law, "Annie Munro", are excellent examples of his distinctive humanely charged vision. Both are lightly painted in oil, fluent, selectively-observed records of his close friends. Among the imaginative compositions, the "Ophelia" of about 1865, provides an interesting example of his stylistic approach in these years, and an opportunity for comparison with the treatment of the same subject in his very youthful Academy exhibit of 1852. The later painting is less romantically



1. Toledo Museum of Art. U.S.A.

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conceived, for there is no longer the emphasis upon atmospheric gloom and the strained emotions of the waif-like, demented Ophelia; instead she is presented with a picturesque appeal made possible by splendid richness of garments within a setting of natural beauty, and the viewer's sympathy is evoked principally by reference to his knowledge of her impending fate.

Another contemporary work of literary origin connected with adolescent feminine emotion is his "Beauty and the Beast", a costume piece suggested by his daughters' pleasure in the traditional fairy tale. Hughes underlines the moral of virtue's triumph over temptation in the idealization of Beauty, an elegant and charming young girl, resisting the allure of a wardrobe of sumptuous dresses.

Close in pictorial character is the "Good-night"^x exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1866. The canvas exemplifies the manner in which Hughes can invest the most ordinary occurrences of everyday domestic life with poetic overtones. The young girl, who discards her garland of flowers as she progresses towards her bed in thoughtful reverie, is lovely in herself, but made much more so by the decorative charm of the rich cloak, with its deep band of embroidered flowers at the hem. An unobtrusive technical ingenuity directs the viewer's attention from the scattered daisies on the floorboards up to the velvet folds of the near-turquoise cloak, and

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beyond, the richness of the girl's hair leads to the garden window, where the soft evening light confirms the appropriateness of the girl's preparations. It is a painting of tranquil associations such as Hughes loved, and the delicacy of touch applied to the canvas witnesses Hughes' personal pleasure in its production. James Hamilton Trist, who purchased "Good-night" admired it deeply. It remained with the Trist family until recent months, when I assisted James Hamilton Trist's nonagenarian grandson to dispose of the painting through Christie, Manson & Woods.

In "Summertime",^x where a young girl reclines on the grass day-dreaming in the sunshine, there are similarities to Rossetti's indolent girls of high complexion, whose thick, flowing hair cascades about their elongated necks. However, I consider that the resemblance is attributable to the fact that both artists borrow from the same source: the luxuriant auburn-haired Venetian beauties pictured by the 16th and 17th century painters - those slightly over-plump persons frequently adorned with a fullness of material about their arms, shoulders, and hips. In "Summertime" Hughes applied his Venetian memories but takes only those elements which he can safely incorporate into his own style without incongruity. It is interesting that Hughes adapts his sources to retain a lightness and delicacy of effect, and unlike Rossetti, he avoids the convolutions of heavier decorative materials.

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"Summertime" is uncomplicated by any literary associations: the pictorial attractions of the pretty girl's red-brown hair flowing upon her silken sleeves, as she toys with the bluebells, requires no further justification.

A beautiful example of Hughes' style of the late 1860s is afforded by his "Girl with Swans"^x where the landscape is constructed to include most of these favourite features which he lovingly detailed from his youth, now seen in the generous variety of sunlit textures like the roughened bark of the massive tree by the waterside, the extensive range of greens, painted now a little broader than in previous years, and a multiplicity of local touches of colour in the flowers and the sky's reflections. The treatment of the swans feathers, and the material of the girl's embroidered skirt provide examples of Hughes' slightly modified deft brushwork which builds up a surface description with greater economy than before. It is interesting that in this painting, and others of the next few years, he experiments with a heavier impasto.

An analysis of the composition reveals that it is highly complex, with many directional pointers and strategically placed blocks of colour and tonal masses, yet the techniques involved have been so smoothly integrated that the viewer is aware only of an apparently simple scene of rustic tranquillity.¹

Hughes' portrayal of young children was always

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1. The one jarring note is the presence of the 6th swan on the left. Examination of the painted surface makes it clear that this is a later addition, probably a demand by the purchaser. Unfortunately no information is available concerning the painting prior to Mr. Peter Eaton's purchase of it some 25 years ago.

warmly humane. The affection presented was genuine and natural in a man who cherished his own family and delighted in the company of his friends' children. It is noticeable that in both invented narrative creations and scenes from real life, the children are painted with a naturalness that is uncommon among his contemporaries. He observed and recorded their ingenuous behaviour without projecting onto them artificialities or pretensions which might please an adult of particular whims. These direct and truthful qualities are present in his 1867 Royal Academy portrait of "Cecil Ursula Aged Three Years" where F.T. Palgrave's little girl is seen beside her nursery door, somewhat selfconsciously obeying a request to measure her height by balancing a strip of wood upon her head.^x The work bears all the evidence of being a rapidly executed personal record capturing some of the pleasant associations of innocent charm. Palgrave had the painting translated into a line engraving² which was used as a frontice-piece to his book of children's stories "The Five Days Entertainment at Wentworth Grange" published in 1868.

Also hung at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1867 was "L'Enfant Perdu" where by the light of a lantern, a woodsman embraces his small daughter who had strayed into the depths of the forest. The painting provided Hughes with the opportunity to combine in an



1. The painting is one of the uncatalogued works at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, where I identified it 7 or 8 years ago. Unfortunately it remains in the "Reserve Collection"

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imaginative composition three of his special interests; the woodland environment, the effects of an artificial illumination, and the study of the quieter areas of domestic emotion. The figure group, isolated by the flickering lamp from the dimness of the background, is skilfully handled in Hughes' broader manner, and the redder hues of the illumination provide just the right degree of dramatic stress to lend conviction to the incident. As with many of Hughes' paintings which feature children, the basic concept would originate in the small adventures of family life, which when transferred to pictorial form retain the hallmark of truth, although sufficiently idealized to appeal to a wider public. The figure of the child was painted from Hughes' daughter Emily, the woodcutter is a slight adaptation of Hughes himself.

Arthur Hughes first published illustrations had been the delicate designs which accompanied William Allingham's book of poetry "The Music Master", in 1855. Despite the general agreement concerning the high quality of the work in artistic circles, and the proof the designs gave of Hughes' valuable potentialities as an illustrator of imaginative material, he received no substantial illustrative commissions for ten years, other than a very few isolated drawings such as those which appeared in "The Queen", "The Cornhill Magazine", and the "Society", nothing by him was seen until the Moxon Edition of "Enoch Arden" in 1866, for which he provided 25 pen and ink drawings. Thereafter he had an increasing number of illustrations published in books of fairy tales: 12 for George McDonald's "Dealings with Fairies" in 1867, fifteen for

Francis Turner Palgrave's "Five Days" Entertainment at Wentworth Grange" in 1868, followed by a considerable expansion of work to meet the demands of the children's part-magazines. His most active years were 1868-1873 when he was much committed to illustration for Alexander Strahan and George MacDonald for publication in "Good Words for the Young". When financial difficulties prevented that magazine from continuing, Hughes opportunities for illustration declined progressively. After his drawings to accompany Christina Rossetti's fairy tale "Speaking Likenesses" of 1874, and the three frontispieces for Miss Thackeray's collected works published in the next year, there is a long interval until the "Graphic" printed his single page of Christmas scenes in 1887.

It is noticeable that Hughes best work in illustration is always done for close acquaintances whose literary work was of personal interest and contained material which was congenial to him. The whimsical phantasies of George MacDonald's tales and those of F.T. Palgrave allowed him to exercise his preference for scenes of children in decorative costume, frequently out of doors, in the company of animals. For Tennyson he could call into play his special sympathies with the fortunes and misfortunes of romantic lovers, and for Christina Rossetti he could draw without reserve upon his experience of the world of innocent childish

emotion. Hughes creative powers could not respond with the same success when the material offered little scope for charming delicacy of effect, and when obliged to treat of the mundane his drawings could deteriorate remarkably in conviction. Such illustrations as those to Matthew Browne's educative lectures for children betray an unjoyful heaviness of touch. Nor was Hughes fitted by nature to display the enthusiasm of vigorous boyhood: it can be observed that he avoids the violent and forceful episodes in boys' tales, and when this is not possible, as in "Tom Brown's Schooldays", his illustrations convey his diffidence in the inappropriate weakness of line.

It is remarkable that during the years when Hughes was most occupied with illustrative work there is so little cross reference to his paintings. Apart from the similarities in conception and design in the chivalrous figures, children and animals, in landscapes, and angels or spirits, there is little worthwhile comparison to be drawn between his paintings and illustrations, of this time. Perhaps having exhausted his creative ingenuity in translating the fiction of ~~the~~ others into drawings there was no further stimulus to borrow any of the ideas for his coloured work. However, the preoccupation of Hughes the painter has governed his selection of ~~the~~ incident and his visualization of character, and marks in

it with distinctive flavour which is not to be found in any other contemporary artist. The emphasis is upon refinement of feeling and delicacy of touch, and the presentation is within a phantasy environment of idyllic landscape. Perhaps only when drawing for unsophisticated children could Hughes allow his imagination that romantic licence which he knew was commercially unacceptable in painting.

Although his graphic work was admired by fellow artists and authors of his circle, there are only a very few published examples of Hughes illustrations between the 1855 edition of "The Music Master", and Moxon's 1866 edition of Tennyson's "Enoch Arden". This must principally be accounted for by the preferences or prejudices of the publishers, and partly by the fact that Hughes had little business acumen, and did not advertise himself. In "The Music Master", in addition to Hughes work, Rossetti and Millais had each contributed drawings. While Rossetti's temperamental behaviour and unreliability might have well discouraged an interested publisher, no such charge could have been made against Arthur Hughes. His neglect during these years indicates a serious absence of appreciation amongst the publishers.

Hughes gratified both Tennyson and his publisher, Moxon, by his 25 pen and ink drawings to the 1866 edition of the Narrative poem "Enoch Arden". This is

clear from the references scattered among the correspondence of the Pre-Raphaelite school, unfortunately Moxon did not long survive to provide Hughes with further commissions, and Tennyson, though he remained on cordial terms with Hughes for the rest of his life, never seems to have recommended him to illustrate his later work.

There are a number of beautiful examples of Hughes personal style among the illustrations to "Enoch Arden", particularly among the earlier landscapes and the scenes of courtship and maternal care, but the story is essentially one of distress and heart-break, and could not inspire Hughes in the manner that George MacDonald's "Dealings with Fairies", certainly did. It was in MacDonald's fairy stories that Hughes found the principal outlet for his creations in a light-line graphic style, admirably suited to the child's amusement and the accompaniment of innocent adventures. Alexander Munro had introduced Hughes to George MacDonald in 1857 during the light hearted weeks spent in decorating the Oxford Union Debating Hall, and thereafter the two men, who had several common interests, remained close acquaintances.

At least some of Hughes 12 designs for MacDonald's children's stories, collectively called "Dealings with fairies" published in 1866, had been drawn much earlier.



"THE DISAPPOINTED LOVER"



Louis Carroll records in his diary for 9th July, 1862 that he had met MacDonald "on his way to a publisher with the M.S. of his fairy-tale, "The light Princess",¹ in which he showed me some exquisite drawings by Hughes".

Hughes' delicacy of touch was ideal in the visualization of the incidents in a fairy tale where the princess is weightless: his designs assist the narrative, gently coaxing the child to a wonder land of the imagination through his kindly whimsical invention. Memorable also are his drawings for the story of "The Shadows",² where Hughes successfully manages to suggest the vague forms of the immaterial night - spirits who elect a human as their king in the iceland illuminated by the Aurora Borealis.

Hughes quiet, charming drawings were equally suitable as accompaniments to F.T. Palgrave's bland accounts of traditional tales in "5 Days Entertainment at Wentworth Grange", which MacMillan published in 1868. Predictably, of the 17 illustrations those which offered the opportunity for imaginative idealization of children and Nature are most tenderly studied. The character of the friendly animals from "Orpheus and Eurydice",³ and the benign lion listening to the boy's flute playing from "The Uncaged Lion"⁴ are most characteristic of Hughes' art, most successful in their power to delight both children and adults.



It was in association with George MacDonald and his amenable publisher, Alexander Strahan, (who specialized in children's books and magazines) that Hughes produced the largest portion of his illustrations. Following the success of "Dealings with Fairies", Strahan encouraged MacDonald and Hughes to co-operate in producing material for his new venture, the amusing but morally wholesome monthly magazine "Good Words for the Young", Hughes first work for the magazine appeared in 1868 and continued through the years of George MacDonald's editorship, for 1870, until the magazine ceased publication in 1872, following a period of financial troubles which could not be resolved by George MacDonald's offer to work without remuneration.

During the years 1868-1870 "Good Words for the Young" printed the instalments of George MacDonald's "At the Back of the North Wind", an allegorical story expressed in a fanciful personification, but intended by the Author to convey a serious ethical message. Although the deeper meaning was quite beyond the comprehension of the children, they delighted in the whimsicalities of the narrative so ably illustrated by Hughes' fluent draftsmanship which conjured up the appropriate atmosphere for the wind-swept adventures. Arthur Hughes 76 exquisite illustrations undoubtedly contributed in large measure to the extreme popularity

of the book which was to become the best-loved of all MacDonald's fairy tales.

Henry Kingsley's "The Boy in Grey" appeared in instalments from 1868 to 1870 in "Good Words for the Young" accompanied by 14 illustrations by Hughes. The peculiar, rambling tale of a prince searching 11 years in fairyland for a symbolic fateful power called "The Boy in Grey" presented considerable difficulties in visualization by an artist. However Hughes chose these incidents which could be modified to suit his own ideals and was able to create delightful designs suitable for his young viewers. During much of the same period he was also illustrating George MacDonald's "Ronald Bannerman's Boyhood" ^{WHICH} was being printed in instalments in the same magazine. The 36 illustrations again offer commentary on Hughes character and his special areas of interest: whenever possible he illustrates the domestic, the imaginative, and the romantic (even in a boy's adventure tale he has the opportunity when one of the women sings an old ballad which includes a prince carrying off a sea-maiden).

A specially interesting design is at the end of the book where the hero visits the grave of the girl whom he had loved - it bears considerable resemblance to the basic composition of the "Home from Sea" theme seen in the painting and the Ashmolean drawing.

Hughes provided 30 illustrations for George MacDonald's "The Princess and the Goblin", published in instalments between 1870 and 1871 in "Good Words for the Young". Again there was sympathetic understanding between author and artist: Hughes responds marvellously to the poetic elements and crystallizes MacDonald's suggestions in elegant imagery which is delightful to children and scarcely less pleasing to adults. Hughes deliberately softens the dark, melancholy overtones present in the text. When he illustrates the Princess's adventures in the underground palace of the creatures of the night, he never horrifies the young reader, rather he extracts what could be comforting. However, the episodes which inspire him to his loveliest and most successful designs are those portraying children in normal human situations such as The King stroking the Princess's hair after supper and the Little girl in a nightgown tip-toing up the old oak stairs in the moonlight.

There is less charm in Hughes' ten designs for Matthew Browne's "Lilliput Revels", a series of miniature plays and poems, which were printed in "Good Words for the Young" between 1869 and 1871. Something of the lightness of touch and the lyrical quality is absent, and I feel that it is highly probable that these drawings were executed without enthusiasm, or



even much personal interest. Most of the 24 designs for the same author's lengthy rhymed chronicle "Innocents Island" (published in instalments, 1871-2, in "Good Words for the Young") fall into the same category and none has the delicacy of effect which makes the designs for George MacDonald instalments in the same volume so attractive.

Sometimes MacDonald's excellent intentions in the matter of moral education manifested itself in a rhetoric which was beyond the understanding or credulity of his readers. Hughes' designs to the stories frequently redress such failings, and by concrete visualization returned the narrative to the boundaries of the child's experience. In "The History of Gutta Percha Willie" MacDonald's rhetorical extravagance describes a paragon of boyhood virtue, impossibly gifted with inventive ingenuity. Even Hughes could not convince children that they might identify themselves with such an unlikely hero. In particular one of the 8 illustrations is sadly lacking in strength and spirit: the virtuous Willie dreaming that he was in the presence of angels. It is easy to sympathize with both Hughes and the juvenile readers. I consider that Hughes characteristic manner is best seen in the drawing where Willie enlightens his father about the nature of a mechanical invention.

Hughes also supplied a small number of drawings to



accompany poems in Strahan's parallel magazine for older persons, "Good Words". The best of these, in the 1871 volume, display Hughes' sensitive technique to much advantage, particularly when he sympathetically treats of youthful romance. One very lovely design is of a young girl dispatching a love-letter upon her dog's collar: "Go, Little Letter, Apace"¹. Another beautiful design is for a poem "The Dial"² by F.W. Simmons.

MacMillan, encouraged by the reception of Hughes illustrations to Palgrave's "Five Days' Entertainment at Wentworth Grange" in 1868, commissioned him, in cooperation with Sidney Prior Hall, to illustrate the 6th edition of Tom Brown's Schooldays, published in 1869. Unfortunately, Hughes style was quite inappropriate to the aggressive vigour of the schoolboy classic. His delicacy of line and idealization of sentiment which graced so many fairy-tales were unhappily unsuited to both the text and the adolescent boys for whom it was intended. By contrast, Hall's stronger handling produced a much more spirited visualization. It was doubtless this circumstance which gained for him the exclusive commission for the illustration of the 1870 edition of "Tom Brown at Oxford". It is understandable that Hughes should feel more at home in the peaceful landscape scenes, and these are the most pleasing of all his designs for "Tom Brown's Schooldays". The



1.



2.

illustrations of infancy, such as "Tom and his nurse in the Farmyard,¹ and Tom and Old Benjy crossing the rustic bridge to their fishing stream,² are technically and aesthetically superior to the following rough-and-tumble episodes at school.

Hughes provided nine illustrations for Thomas Gordon Hake's "Parables and Tales", published by Chapman and Hall in 1872. They are not among his most memorable, but they bear the mark of his personal sensitivity and invention. The best of them depict the adventures^{of} the little girl who figures in the poem, "The Lily of the Valley".

Of the activities which Hughes undertook at this time none is more important than his illustrations to Christina Rossetti's "Sing Song". Originally it was intended that the drawings should be made by Alice Boyd, the Scottish artist friend of W.B. Scott; however, when the first designs were received in the summer of 1870 Christina and her brothers were dissatisfied with the rather vigorous draughtsmanship of Alice Boyd which seemed inappropriate to an infant's book of verse. On the recommendation of the Brothers Dalziel, F.J. Frazer was asked to submit some designs. These, too, proved to be unsatisfactory. William Rossetti in his diary noted: ".... Obtained some specimens of the wood designs of F.J. Frazer whom Dalziel Brothers propose for illustrating Christina's book. I don't think him, from the

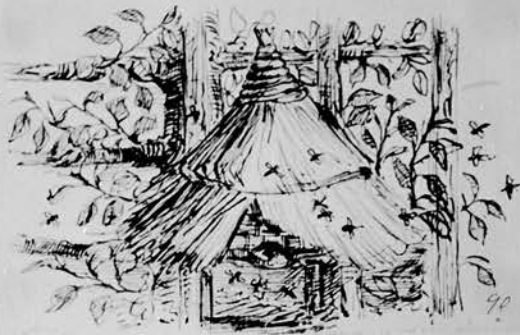


DESIGNS BY SIDNEY PRIOR HALL

evidence of these designs, at all a desirable man. Wrote to Dalziels to say so, strongly recommend Hughes should be invited."

On the 18th May he writes: "Dalziels acquiesce and apparently with full cordiality, in the proposal that Hughes should be employed to illustrate Christina's book: they even say the only illustrator. To this I quite assent."

Hughes was undoubtedly the ideal artist for this undertaking: he was extremely sensitive to childrens' moods and interests, was imaginative, delicate in execution, and generous in negotiation. He undertook the commission and produced 120 drawings for the illustrations which were accounted eminently suitable for their purpose. Christina herself was delighted. William Rossetti comments:² "Arthur Hughes is illustrating it ("Sing Song") with some very charming designs in the right spirit for such semi-childish, semi-suggestive work; I think the book ought to be a decided success." Dante Gabriel Rossetti was equally pleased. He comments:³ "Christina's book is, I think divinely lovely in itself, and in Arthur Hughes illustrations which are quite unequalled for sweetness." Ford Madox Brown had much the same opinion: William Rossetti records in his diary:⁴ "....He was singularly pleased with the poems and illustrations, going so far as to say that the poems are about Christina's finest



What does the bee do?
Bring home honey.
And what does Father do?
Bring home money.
And what does Mother do?
Pay out the money.
And what does Baby do?
Eat up the honey.



All the bells were ringing
And all the birds were singing
When Molly cut down crying
For her broken doll -
O you silly Moll!
Robbing and sighing
For a broken doll,
When all the bells are ringing
And all the birds are singing.

DESIGNS BY MISS BOYD

1. Rossetti family collection. (The greatest part of the diary has never been published)
2. William Rossetti to Holman Hunt, 10th September, 1871.
3. Letter to William Rossetti, undated.
Both above in Rossetti Collection.
4. 19th October, 1871.

things, and Hughes the first of living book illustrators."

Christina Rossetti, who had been so pleased with the "Sing Song" designs was sure that Arthur Hughes could best interpret the fancy of her children's story "Speaking Likenesses". On learning that MacMillan was negotiating with Hughes for the illustrations she wrote to her brother, William, on the 15th May 1874² "... Of course this is accepted, to my great contentment. He asked me about illustrators and I proposed - or rather, I expressed my own preference for A.H.: wherefore I am pleased." And again, to William on the 18th May, 1874² she gave the news: "... To my great satisfaction yesterday heard from MAC that Arthur Hughes engages not only to do my illustrations but to do them by mid-June, so presumably my "Nowhere" (the title originally projected) will be out for Christmas."

This book which Christina Rossetti dismissed as "merely an Xmas trifle in the Alice style with an eye to the market"³ was accompanied by 12 delightful compositions in which Hughes treats of his favourite subjects: children, innocent amusement and animals in landscape. They are certainly to be accounted among the finest creations of Hughes' distinctively refined draughtsmanship.

The designs which Hughes provided for the title pages of each of volumes 1, 2, and 3 of Miss Thackeray's collected works, published in 1875, are uninspired



The city mouse lives in a house ;—
The garden mouse lives in a bower,
He's friendly with the frogs and toads,
And sees the pretty plants in flower.

The city mouse eats bread and cheese ;—
The garden mouse eats what he can ;
We will not grudge him seeds and stalks,
Poor little timid furry man.

60



Why did baby die,
Making Father sigh,
Mother cry ?

Flowers, that bloom to die,
Make no reply
Of "why?"
But bow and die.

"ARTUR HUGHES DESIGNS"

1. Published by Macmillan, Christmas 1874
2. Rossetti Collection.
3. Letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 4th May 1874

by comparison with the charming creations of the immediately preceding years.

After 1875 Hughes received only occasional commissions for illustrative work. Between then and 1904 when he worked, upon his next book for the MacDonal family, his only published designs were the triple Festive scenes printed on a single page of the Christmas number of "The Graphic" in 1887, and another seven designs to poems by Hall Caine and Frederick Greenwood, which appeared in the 1895 edition of "The London Monthly".

By the end of the 1860's Hughes' economic situation had not improved, and he was still struggling to earn a minimum living from his art. The expectations which had seemed reasonable in the earlier part of the decade, that he would be able to establish himself as a free-lance artist, specializing in his favourite range of subjects, and disposing of them to discriminating patrons for enough to recompense him fairly for the time and effort expended upon his very careful work, was not realized. The modest and unrewarding prices which Hughes charged in his youth could not be raised when his name and reputation became better known. There was never much competition to buy his productions, and Hughes, who avoided publicity, was by personality unfitted to advance himself by the arts of salesmanship or any sort of scheming or manouvering among the dealers and private buyers. Most of Hughes pictures were bought by a few



There is but one May in the year,
 And sometimes May is wet and cold ;
 There is but one May in the year
 Before the year grows old.

Yet though it be the chilliest May,
 With least of sun and most of showers,
 Its wind and dew, its night and day,
 Bring up the flowers.

SING-SONG-DESIGN ABOVE



patron acquaintances, reasonably prosperous in business or industry, but not wealthy. Their business training led them to be cautious in all purchases, so that even in the more idealistic activity of building an art collection they scrupled to pay more than the market value. Hughes' prices never rose to a level when he could paint at leisure without anxiety about his day to day economics and his future prospects.

Hughes works did not win public acclaim with the attendant material success such as Frith and Millais enjoyed. There was not even a single occasion when his immense pains and dedication of purpose was momentarily in the lime-light of the commercial art world, honoured and appropriately rewarded by splendid purchase and copyright fees, like the good fortune which came to Holman Hunt at intervals to encourage and support his loyalty to Pre-Raphaelite art. Hughes remained chronically short of cash, like Ford Madox Brown, throughout his professional life.

By the 1870s there were fewer commissions and purchases by patrons. Those who had supported him in earlier years had build up their collections, and their enthusiasm had wained. The situation is characterized by reference to his most regular patrons, Trist and Leathart. In 1871 Trist had purchased "Poll's the milkmaid o' the Farm" at a price of £65, thereafter his acquisitions from Hughes were small works in the £20-30

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range, or free gifts. Leathart was to have only one other work from Hughes, the family group of 1879.

In the 1870s Hughes was having increasing difficulty in disposing of pictures from the exhibition walls. Even his very modestly priced paintings (in the £30-£40 range), offered at the Dudley and New Galleries, were frequently returned unsold. The opportunities which he had for work, other than the commissions from regular patrons, seem often to have been arranged through the good offices of friends. The correspondence of the pre-Raphaelite circle offers many instances of Hughes being named as a worthy subject for patronage. D.G. Rossetti and Ruskin both wrote in recommendation of him to Miss Heaton, Ford Madox Brown frequently praises Hughes work to James Leathart, and writes of taking prospective purchasers to his studio. Another example is given by Ford Madox Brown, when in 1868, he recommended Hughes to Frederick Shields¹ who wished to have a colleague to assist him in the painting of large-scale photographs for an enterprising individual called MacLaughlan. The work was not attractive to an imaginative fully trained artist, but it provided some of that extra money which Hughes needed so badly. (Hughes accepted the offer of part-time work and did obtain an income over several years.)

In part Hughes' lack of professional success was the result of his own wish for a retired life, and the fact that he lived some distance from the artistic circles.

1. Ford Madox Brown to Frederick Shields, undated other than "1868", Rossetti Collection.

From the correspondence of the artists of the period it is clear that Hughes seldom took part in social life. Living in the country he was rather out of touch with the other artists of London, and even those of the Pre-Raphaelite circles. As early as 1864 his isolation was established: Ford Madox Brown writes to James Leathart: "We had a gathering here of some friends, Monday evening Hughes and his wife were here - two very rare people to see."

The correspondence of Ford Madox Brown and F.J. Stephens and that of other members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle give ample evidence of Hughes' financial difficulties. In the 1860s when Hughes was living economically in the country and painting and selling more work than at any time in his career, he still was in financial difficulties, principally by reason of his works being underpriced. In 1862 he accompanies his receipt to Mr. Trist for £25 for the small version of "The King's Orchard" with a letter expressing his gratitude:..... "I would have been hard pressed but for the payment". In an undated letter to James Leathart of 1867 Hughes inquires if he is interested in purchasing one of his works and describes his financial situation as "Rather desperate". The person who assisted Hughes most often was his friend Alexander Munro who was ever generous and kind. Typically he wrote in 1861: "If at Xmas you think A.H. wants some (money) give him what he may wish - there will be lots coming in soon to replace it all."

1. 24th March, 1864. Leathart family.

Munro continued to assist Hughes even after he had moved to the South of France in a vain attempt to recover his health, which had been undermined from the middle of the 1860s by Consumption. Hughes, on his part did all that he could to repay his friend in service, supervising the completion by assistants of unfinished works left in the studio to which he never returned. Alexander Munro, in a letter to his sister Annie, in the Summer of 1871, sent this message to Hughes: "You will tell Hughes how much I wish he could come here, if he can, before I die - September, or October, or earlier, - if God spares me so long. I will pay half his fare."¹ Hughes travelled to the South of France and there executed a very beautiful crayon drawing of Munro^x during the last months of his life. Out of affection for his friend he disguises the critical condition of his health. He died on the 31st December. His wife Mary, survived him by less than a year before she, too, died of Consumption. His two young sons were brought up by his sister Annie.

Few drawings by Hughes of the Munro family have survived, but of especial interest are two delicate pencil studies of Mary³ and Annie Munro⁴ which can be dated to the early 1860s.

Hughes did not vie with the other artists in London for honours of professional distinction: he

1. Munro family
2. He did not offer to pay the whole fare because in the last months of his life he had realized how little money he had left to bequeath to his wife and two sons, and was deeply concerned for their future.
3. Mary Munro. 5 x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Munro family collection.
4. Annie Munro 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 in. Munro family collection

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24 x 18 in.

never was elected to the Royal Academy although on several occasions he was nominated. Had he been elected it would certainly have been of material assistance to his career - for then as now, in the opinion of many, the initials were a guarantee of quality in the Academician's productions and a guide to speculators. Fortunately in 1878 he had been left Wandle Bank, the home of his Godmother, near Carshalton, and he was able to live there under pleasant conditions until 1891 when Hughes' finances had deteriorated to a point when he was no longer able to maintain Wandle Bank and had to move to a smaller house at Kew.

The few writers who have treated of Hughes' painting have generally considered that the quality of his work undergoes a serious deterioration in the 1860s and becomes thoroughly dull by the 1870s. This, in my opinion, is a serious error. It is true that there is a change of technique, but there is no change in spirit nor the characteristic atmosphere which he is able to evoke by his compositions.

After the middle 1860s Hughes' brushwork broadens considerably, precise textural descriptions become rarer and there are fewer examples where he is delighting in sheer virtuoso performance when handling the favourite elements of his design. Such treatment was, however, accessory to his principal aim: the creation of a mood and a convincing situation. It should not be considered

1. He was nominated for the Royal Academy Associateship in 1868, 1870, 1874, and 1877.

a failing on the part of Hughes that he altered his manner for there was no obligation upon him to continue in a single style. It is curious that Hughes should be singled out for disapproval when his brushwork modified; most of his contemporaries did the same.

Historians and critics have written of a deterioration in his work after first youth, and by close proximity to a similar comment upon Millais, imply that a comparison may be drawn between them - for Millais had failed to maintain the standards of achievement and the promise of his earlier work. In the case of Millais, regret for the passing of his first style is tempered by the argument that his later art is still worthy of serious interest: although he became a fashionable and popular academic, he remained an admirable technician, on the other hand, the judgement of the critics, largely based upon a compound of ignorance and prejudice, is that after the 1860s Hughes painting so weakens that it can be dismissed from consideration with a sweeping generalization of contempt. I believe that the examination of Arthur Hughes painting from the end of the 1860s for some 15 years or more provides evidence to disprove the alleged collapse of his creative and descriptive powers and reveals numerous admirable technical methods in the paintwork which he uses in the continuing domestic and romantic themes, landscapes, studies of children, and portraits,

Moreover there are also novel genre elements and exotic² introductions, of much interest, such as his Breton and Cornish peasant scenes.

A study of the paintings of other artists in his pre-Raphaelite circle shows - as might be reasonably expected - that each exhibits changes of manner and subject beyond the first enthusiasm of youthful experiment. Ford Madox Brown, Rossetti, and even Holman-Hunt substantially modify their styles of painting in subject-matter and technique to accommodate the experience of their professional practice. The Ford Madox Brown Exhibition of 1964 and the Holman-Hunt Exhibition in 1969, and the Rossetti Exhibition of 1973 presented the opportunities to see how far in each case the artist had moved by the 1870s from their idealistic Pre-Raphaelite treatment.

The painting of Ford Madox Brown displays a bias towards genre and an increasing element of clumsiness which may be clearly seen in "Work"^(COMPLETED 1865) and confirmed in most of the subjects of his middle years which escaped re-painting. For some years before his last major undertaking, the twelve historical decorations for the Great Hall of Manchester Town Hall (1879-1893), he had employed an imagery and surface treatment distant from the Pre-Raphaelite ideals of "Pretty Baa-Lambs"² (1851-9), and "The Last of England" (1855).³

Even discounting the genre of the Eastern subjects,

1. Manchester City Art Gallery.
2. Birmingham City Art Gallery.
3. Same location.

Holman-Hunt's canvases by the later 1860s have an appearance in colour, texture and mood, very different from his youthful creations: his 1868 "Portrait of Mrs. Waugh"¹ introduces a disturbing mixture of dark-tones reddened purple, and an unmistakable ⁶courseness of brushwork. These tendencies are accentuated in the '70s, perhaps most obviously in "The Triumph of the Innocents"² (1876-1887) which cost him so much pains in the effort to retain the Pre-Raphaelite ideals. The picture is indeed very different from his early work: the brittle precision of detail is still present, but the freshness of the bright landscape colours has gone. Only the stubborn, but misguided persistence of the artist could have insisted upon struggling to impose upon himself the requirements of a vision and technique appropriate to his youth.

Rossetti by the 1870s had developed extremes of mannerism which are to be seen in both the Italianate borrowings and the repetitious ornamental portraits. His drawings had lost the crisp fluency present in the works done from life twenty years before, and he indulges in tiresome formulas to describe the hair, neck, eyes, and mouth of his current favourite type.

The "Pandora" of 1871³ and the "Astarte Syriaca" of 1877⁴ may be taken as works which display his later choice of colour harmonies and the broadened brushwork which he regularly uses in these years, and it is undeniably

1. The Evelyn Waugh Trust.
2. Walker Gallery, Liverpool.
3. Private Collection.
4. City Art Gallery, Manchester.

disappointing when compared with the brilliant earlier work, when a versatility of inventive imagination had been present to offset technical weaknesses.

When Hughes painting of the same years is examined and compared with the productions of his Pre-Raphaelite contemporaries, it is not shame, but considerable honour which accrues to him, for the changes which may be found in his painting are not those which arise from facile stereotyping of subject-matter, nor willful mannerism, nor forced execution, but those which follow a natural development from the youthful pre-occupation with precision of detail to a looser handling more natural to professional maturity, and an expansion of the range of subject-matter to include areas of life beyond the romantic dream and the domestic circle. What is important is that the changes in his painting practice do not result in work that is less inventive, personal, or poetic.

The decade of the 1870s was one of constant activity for Hughes. Both by reason of the need to work more quickly and a disinclination to maintain the particularizing tendencies of youth, he was persuaded to indulge in a greater breadth of handlings - a characteristic which was in keeping with the tendency among fellow artists both in England and France, where he took extended vacations on a number of occasions. Unfortunately there is very little documentary information available about

his personal and professional life at this time, and nothing which could give anything of his own thoughts concerning the changing taste of the picture-buying public and the novelties of the younger artists.

For some 15 or 20 years after the modification of his early technique it is possible to see a consistent pattern in his productions which remain close to the work of earlier years in subject-matter, but with a rearrangement of emphasis. The tendency is towards a diminution of descriptive narrative and in all but genre, and a greater dependence upon the physical beauties of nature to render his work attractive to the collectors. From six Shakespearian works of this period, recorded by name or description, only two are available for examination: the scenes from "As you Like It" and "Summer is Icumen In". Both are less illustrative than pictorial - beautiful studies in landscape where the literary associations are on a subdued plane of interest. When treating subject matter suggested by Keats, Tennyson, and regional poets of his choice, the action is always severely subordinated to his preoccupation with Nature. In these years there are only a few amorous attachments and lovers meetings, similarly only a small number of chivalrous scenes are pictured - all out of doors.

In landscape Hughes now often makes reference to a mood of nostalgia or regret, such as can be observed in works like "The Convent Boat" of "Summer is Icumen In".

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The atmosphere of sadness or reflection is found also in domestic studies like "^eMomories" and "A Passing Cloud". There are numerous portraits throughout the 1870s and 1880s, of which the great majority are for established patrons like the Trists or Leatharts, or old acquaintances like W.B. Scott, the Lushington and Hill families, but some are commissioned by collectors who only developed an interest in his art in the '70s.

The principal novelty in his subject matter is the painting of many genre pieces from the mid-70s. These arose, most probably, from the joint pressures of public demand and the need to earn more than could be obtained from the sale of his idealistic subjects to meet the increasing financial responsibilities connected with his family. It was a time when there was a definite resistance to sales of his preferred work at the Royal Academy and the smaller exhibitions urged him to consider a concession to popular taste, but there was also the influence of his visits to Brittany, which brought to his attention the possibilities of peasant subjects. In the '80s Children enter his Genre scenes, which are marked by touches of gentle humour.

For the first time since 1858 Hughes had no picture on display at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1875, nor any work in the two following years. No documents are available which comment on the circumstances so I can only conjecture that Hughes offerings in these years were

unacceptable to the selection committees whose membership now included representatives of the younger men, less sympathetic to Hughes' art.

In the 1870s and '80s Hughes applies Shakespearian quotations to a number of works with the purpose of establishing a train of thought in the viewer's mind by association with the text. The mood is usually nostalgic and always contemplative. Among those works which can not now be traced was "Sigh no more Ladies, Sigh no More" shown at the Royal Academy in 1868, which was briefly noticed by Lewis Carroll as a girl lost in reverie. Three years later at the Academy he showed his "Evening: so service shall with steeled sinews toil, and labour shall refresh itself with hope." which the correspondent of the "Art Journal" for July 1871 described as an old man carrying firewood on his back set within an evening landscape with children and spring flowers - a work which, it seems, contained Hughes favoured poetic and symbolic elements.

A not dissimilar mood seems to have been present in his "Vanity" exhibited at the Academy exhibition of 1878 with the quotation from Shakespeare's sonnet

"Time doth transfix the flourish set upon youth." ³ F

Usually, if it was possible, Hughes would grasp at the opportunity of painting his dearly loved landscape when relevant to a Shakespearian theme, and he was further pleased if he could introduce a romantic figure, such

1. "Much Ado About Nothing" 2nd scene, third act.
2. "Henry Vth" 2nd scene, second act.
3. Line 8, Sonnet No. 60

as was found in his picture "In the Forest of Arden", which is today only known from the illustrative drawing in the New Gallery catalogue for 1887.

The triptych with scenes from "As you Like It"¹ which was hung at the Royal Academy in 1872 is one of his largest and most ambitious works. Although it does closely relate to episodes in Acts 2 and 3 of the play, and there are passages of interesting character study in the figures of Orlando, Rosalind, and Touchstone and Audrey, the principal attraction lies in the marvellous manipulation of the appearance of Nature, which has so enthralled him that he was unwilling to forgo the pleasure of painting it comprehensively. Without doubt the focus of attention is thereby transferred from the nominal subjects. The "Art Journal" critic when writing of the work commented:² "The character parts are second to the display of woodland scenery, and there is no link of action to concentrate the interest. As a representation of forest glade it is masterly, and it would seem that this has been the painter's utmost ambition.

Another subject to which has been added a Shakespearian quotation is the work which was materially altered after being shown in 1882 at "The New Gallery" with the title "Summer is Icumen In"³. Originally the picture showed only one figure to the left, but on being returned unsold, Hughes modified it to become an incident from "As you Like It", where Orlando wistfully observes



1. WALKER ART GALLERY, LIVERPOOL.
2. "THE ROYAL ACADEMY REVIEW" JULY, 1872.
3. THE TITLE BEING THAT OF THE MEDIEVAL SONG-

Rosalind and Celia ^wWalking in the middle distance. Here the paintwork exhibits a diminution of emphasis on precise detailing of leafage and solid surfaces, and it is composed with less tightness of structure in the woodland than in past work. There is an easy recession into the more distant areas which is assisted by a nicely judged degree of aerial perspective and the directional guidance from the dog's interested movements. Unfortunately the work is slightly flawed by the distorted proportions of Orlando's body, which somewhat interferes with the reading of the composition.

At intervals during these years of Hughes middle period he returns to subjects of chivalry. At the Royal Academy of 1870 his "Sir Galahad"^{1/2}, based upon the romantic idealization of Tennyson's hero was hung beside his other literary subject, "Endemyion"³ - a brain-sick shepherd, etc." "Sir Galahad" caused Hughes a great deal of trouble, and had been in the course of production for at least four years.⁴ A rugged landscape and a rude stone bridge had stimulated the creation of this canvas, which suggests to the viewer a melancholy oppressiveness not normally found in Hughes' work. The location was recorded in a letter of 1892 which he wrote to Alice Boyd.⁵ "It was delightful to visit, and with my wife and Agnes and Emily, the old landscape in Cumberland that projected me long ago to paint Galahad, and it looks better than



1. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
2. "The Royal Academy Review", July 1872.
3. This picture can not now be located.
4. Lewis Carroll noted in his diary for 24th June, 1866, that he had called upon the Hughes family and seen "a lovely picture of Sir Galahad in progress".
5. 20th November, 1892. Formerly at Penkill Castle, now at University of British Columbia, Canada.

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ever." Although the picture is successful in conjuring up the circumstances of Sir Galahad's single-minded perseverance in the arduous quest for the Holy Grail, it is not a naturally attractive work and has something of the appearance of being a laboured one.

A much more immediately appealing composition which is loosely connected with the legends of Chivalry is the Gouache of "The White Hind", an imaginative treatment of the traditional European legend upon the theme that only Virtue (in the person of an innocent young girl) has the power to neutralize evil acts.¹ The work is an excellent example of Hughes' considerable powers of conveying the tender feminine sentiments within the environment of a beautiful and appropriately-keyed landscape setting. The drawing is fluent and, in the slightly broader manner used in the earlier '70s, serves as an indication of the fine work of which he was capable of producing in the medium.² The scene is a beautiful evocation of controlled melancholy so persuasively presented that we can enter readily into the fairy-tale world which he visualizes. The quiet landscape is a treasured location which he employed with thoughtful variation for some years. Similarly, the girl (his daughter, Amy) wears an Autumnal gown and a red cap which figures in a number of paintings of the '70s.

No example of Hughes Chivalrous subjects have survived which can be dated from the 70s or 80s. If he



1. Among the artistic correspondence of the 19th century there are occasional references to Hughes' work in water-colours, and there is reason to suppose that he was well used to it - unfortunately, very few examples have survived. One such is the watercolour version of the 1860 "Knight of the Sun" at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

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painted these subjects they have been lost without record, or, being unsold he repainted the canvases as was his frequent habit. His next essays of this character date from the early 1890s, when, at the request of Miss Alice Boyd, of Penkill, he reworked a small version of the 1860 "Knight of the Sun"^X. It is quite possible that this renewal of acquaintance with the romantic hero inspired him to produce several other Knightly subjects shortly afterwards. The correspondence with Alice Boyd contains a reference to him having a little work called "The Knight's Turning Point" in progress in 1894, and in the following year he showed his "Rust" (a knight removing rust from his sword) at The New Gallery. Although "Rust" is no longer available for examination, recently I have located, in a private collection, a painting^X remarkably close in composition to the 1895 "Rust" which by the evidence of the handling of the paintwork is extremely close in date. In it the knight is a little less than perfectly integrated within the composition, but the landscape itself is admirably painted - underlining, once again how Hughes retained his command over technique and poetic description in Nature long after his style had lost popularity at the exhibitions.

In 1872 he exhibited at the Royal Academy a painting of delightful and picturesque simplicity, known as "Poll the Milkmaid o' the Farm"^F. It is an example

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of Hughes taking joy in the widest possible range of textures and tonalities and colours in a naturally lovely setting. He had a remarkable proficiency in conveying the quality of the light and the nature of the weather conditions. It has the spirit of an idyll associated with the rustic simplicity of life preserved and enriched by his sensitivity of touch. His nice selection of the features of Nature prevents the work becoming commonplace, and his harmonies of colour lend enchantment.

Arthur Hughes' delight in the loveliness of English countryside was so keen that he often chose the location and began painting before he considered what figures could be introduced into it to render the work saleable as a subject picture. Even among Pre-Raphaelite painters, especially appreciative of Nature's attractions of form and colour, Hughes is an outstanding exponent of the tasteful selection in those areas of interest to which he limited himself.

His unusual ability to capture the pleasantest appearance of foliage is displayed clearly in "The Lady of Shalott"¹ a work which it could be written truthfully that he had applied all his experience to the record of Nature taken from life. Having painted a riverside scene Hughes converts it into the subject of the title by the addition of figures. The group on the left has many weaknesses, particularly with regard to the soft, blurred

1. Location: The Fine Art Society, New Bond Street, Lon

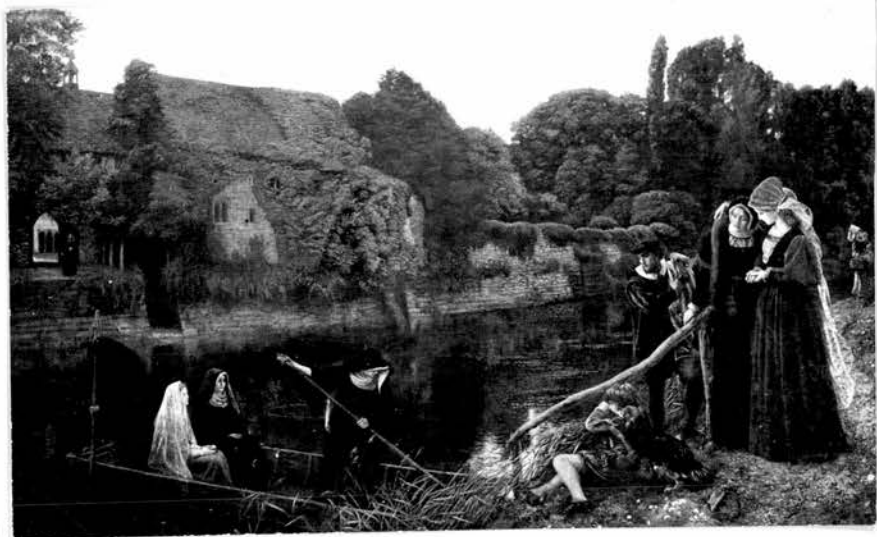
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tones of the faces, but the Lady of Shallot herself is thoroughly unsatisfactory in the absence of sound form, which can not be justified by her semi-submerged state. The "Art Journal" critic¹ appreciated the distinctive qualities in the picture when he wrote that Hughes "Has found in Nature a complexity and a love of colour which modern art has been content to leave unrevealed, and his efforts are directed to a deeper realization than others... the picture, however, impresses us with the close loving observation bestowed on natural things, the increased beauty which such observation gives to the results."

The failings which were present in "The Lady of Shallot"^x are not found in the "Convent Boat"² shown at the Academy of the next year. Here the air of gentle melancholy is captured to perfection amid surroundings of exquisite beauty. So exactly and so sensitively has Hughes portrayed the circumstances of the girl's leave-taking of her family before joining the nuns of the convent (seen on the opposite bank of the river) that we can enter into their emotional experience.

Presented with a work of this quality, so admirable in composition and colour and conception, it is difficult to understand how Hughes could be regarded as an inferior artist during these years by latter-day critics, except by offering as explanation the fact that very little of his work has been available for inspection and appreciation - the finest works of his maturity have remained



2

1. "Art Journal" 1873, July: 'Academy Reviews'.

2 "The Convent Boat" 37 x 61 in. 1874

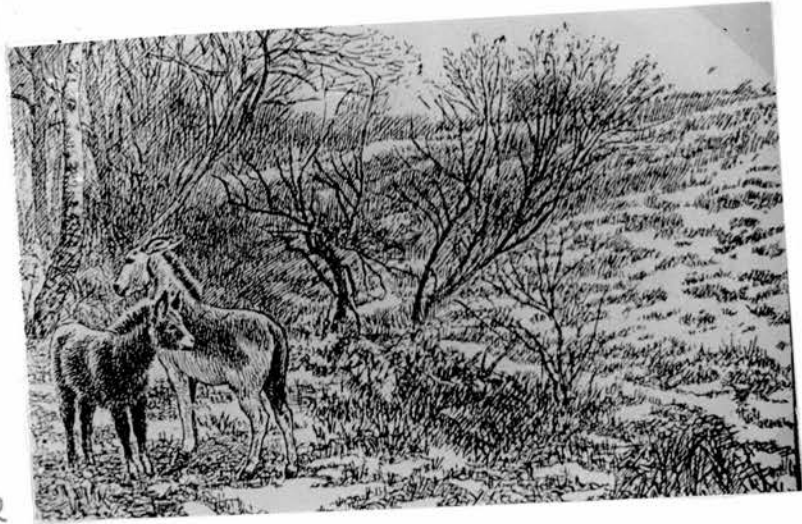
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the treasured possessions of private owners.

It is curious how few examples there are of the Winter season in Hughes' surviving works. It must surely be due to the fact that that time of year did not appeal to him and as a result he remained somewhat indifferent to the pictorial possibilities of his favourite type of landscape transformed by winter weather conditions. Those persons who knew him well have told me that in conversation his stress was always upon the beauties of Spring which in his opinion was the Pre-Raphaelite season. From the early '70s there survives an unpretentious but attractive little panel featuring a snow scene, "Winter", which leads to regret that he did not undertake the subject more frequently. Another example of a winter scene is his "Last of the Snow"², illustrated by a drawing in The New Gallery catalogue to the 1888 exhibition, where he sympathetically records two donkeys shivering in the cold beside leafless bushes and trees. (Unfortunately the painting can not now be traced.)¹

In the romantic subjects of the '70s and '80s Hughes does not study unalloyed joy but makes reference to emotional tensions and the insecurity of human happiness - his concern is with the deeply-felt emotions of the young, their hopes, disappointments, regrets and anxieties. He had at the Royal Academy exhibition ⁸ of 1878 "Uncertainty"² which represented a girl waiting in suspense for the result of her lover's interview with her father. In 1881



2

1. It is an interesting fact that Hughes, who had such a benevolent attitude to animals, appears not to have painted any animals as the primary subject of his picture - with the exception of the group of Edith Leathan's dogs - nor does he paint sporting pictures with horses shown, although he was an expert and enthusiastic horseman who always had a mount ready for use at Wandle Bank.

2. Unlocated.



he showed his "Sailing Signal Gun" of which we can gain some idea from the drawing given in "Blackburn's Academy Notes" for that year. It was a costume picture considerably charged with anxiety in the person of the suitor and indecision on the part of the girl.

Fortunately, one of the "mood paintings" of this period survives in "Memories" which was hung at the Royal Academy in 1883. Here a thoughtful girl in a silvered-pink gown listens to the melody of a violinist playing behind her. The quotation used in the cata-

logue "In sweet music in such art,
Killing care and grief of heart,
Fall asleep, or hearing die"³

invites the viewer to interpret the composition in terms of romantic anxiety or disappointment. It is not one of Hughes' successful paintings: it exhibits a degree of awkwardness in the posture of the kneeling girl (certainly one of his daughters) which is unfortunately emphasised by her frontal arrangement within the picture area. The surface of the canvas shows Hughes' increasing economy of effort in descriptive textures. It does not lack pleasing effects but there are some dull passages, and again Hughes has had some difficulty in making the smooth connections necessary between separated figures.

A most interesting production is his imaginatively treated secular nativity shown at the Royal Academy in 1888 with a quotation from George MacDonald "Little One Who Straight Has Come Down the Heavenly Stair".⁴



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1. Unlocated
2. The Watts Gallery, Compton
3. Shakespeare, Henry VIII, Act 3, Scene 1.
4. "Ode: Intimations of Immortality, from Recollections of Early Childhood"

"Our Birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And Cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!"

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This Work's¹ interpretation was made more clear by the addition of a quotation from Wordsworth in the catalogue: "Our Birth is but a Sleep and A forgetting" It is an affectionately painted work from his daughter and grandchild as the principal figures. There are numerous touches of unstressed symbolism and many reminiscences of the work of other artists. The angels who benevolently view the new mother, to whom they have just presented the baby, have obvious affinities with Burne-Jones' figures on the "Golden Stairs" and the child's rustic father, who has entered so hurriedly was surely suggested by Van der Goes' "Portinari Altarpiece".

Only a small proportion of the paintings which Hughes produced between the end of the 1860s and the middle '80s can now be traced. Although he considered portraiture an important area of his professional activity, and would have welcomed appreciative acknowledgment, the unforceful character of his work was at a serious disadvantage when competing for the limited exhibition wall space. A lively and attractive portrait group is his canvas of four of the seven children of Dr. George Birkbeck Hill, headmaster of Bruce Castle School. The painting is undated, but can be calculated from the appearance of the children as being close to 1868. Another characteristic example of the same period is "Mrs. Finch and two Children" (1872) informally seen



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in their garden after the manufacture of daisy chains. Hughes responded so well to the innocent charm of children and the company of his friendly patrons, that a portrait like this rises far above the standard of simple good likeness and competency to become a work of considerably merit with his range of endeavour. His portrait of the childrens' father, Mr. Charles Waring Finch, dates from the next year and is an example of Hughes unpretentious imagery, a quiet, plain record of his patron who assisted Hughes by purchases and recommendations.

One of the most fascinating of all ^{THE PORTRAITS} of the '70s is the second family group which, he did for James Leathart, known as "The Christmas Carol at Bracken Dean",¹ finished in 1879. By this time Mr. Leathart's family had grown enormously since the portrait of Mrs. Leathart and three of her children, in 1863. In picturing eleven children together Hughes was presented a very considerable problem of grouping. If his solution is not quite as elegant as might have been adopted by a Frans Hals, it is an arrangement which is pleasing - and doubtless could have been improved if Hughes had been able to assemble all the family together for his painting sessions. However, a number of the family were away from home (the boys were at boarding school) during the portion of time when he worked at Newcastle, and he had to give separate sittings. The quality of



"A Christmas Carol at Bracken Dene" 37 x 61 in. 1879

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