

**The Hidden Pre-Raphaelite: The Art and Writings of
Frederic George Stephens from 1848–70**

Robert Wilkes

Volume One

Text

Oxford Brookes University

School of History, Philosophy and Culture

Department of English and Modern Languages

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the award of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2019

Abstract

The Hidden Pre-Raphaelite: The Art and Writings of Frederic George Stephens from 1848–70

Robert Wilkes

This interdisciplinary thesis presents a fresh assessment of the art and writings of Frederic George Stephens (1827–1907), one of the seven founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, during the period from 1848 until 1870. Despite his centrality within the Pre-Raphaelite circle, and his lifelong dedication to communicating their ideals to the reading public, Stephens has remained a marginal figure in studies of Pre-Raphaelitism, frequently quoted from but seldom considered as an independent subject in his own right. I have discovered letters, manuscripts and artworks by Stephens which have been previously unknown to scholars and which deepen our understanding of his art, his writing and his personal relationships. His few surviving paintings and drawings have been neglected or even wholeheartedly dismissed by art historians and are examined here in detail for the first time, reinstating his work in the canon of Pre-Raphaelite art. By concentrating on the earlier part of Stephens's career, I show how he navigated the transition from practising artist to professional critic in the 1850s. His early training as a painter at the Royal Academy gave him a unique perspective for his art criticism, which used a lyrical prose style to convey his acute knowledge of art history and his belief in the moral purpose of art. Consequently, this study demonstrates Stephens's development of a critical voice which enabled him not only to vocalise the aims and ideals of Pre-Raphaelitism, but also to adapt to emerging aesthetic theories in British art during the volatile decade of the 1860s. Little-seen articles and essays in the *Germ*, the *Critic*, the *Crayon*, the *Athenaeum* and *Macmillan's Magazine* are examined chronologically in order to chart the evolution of his critical opinions.

Acknowledgements

I am pleased to thank the institutions that have supported by research. Oxford Brookes University have provided me with the funded PhD Studentship, without which all this would not have been possible, as well as the generous travel grants which have enabled me to make crucial research trips to Vancouver and New York. The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art also awarded me a Publication Grant to assist with my first published article in the *British Art Journal* in 2017.

For their help I also wish to thank the staff of the Bodleian Library; the Library of the Royal Academy; the Archive of Art and Design, London; the National Art Library at the V&A; the New York Public Library; the Morgan Library, New York; and the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia.

Parts of my thesis have been presented at conferences at the National Gallery, London, the Royal Academy and the Birmingham and Midland Institute, and I am grateful to all the organisers for giving me the opportunity me to showcase my research. I am indebted to the Pre-Raphaelite Society not only for allowing me to publish an article on Stephens and Holman Hunt in their *Review*, but also for inviting me to present a lecture on Stephens's art at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in March 2019.

Special thanks must go to the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum in Kent. When I began my research in 2016, I did not anticipate that I would stumble upon such a large repository of Stephens-related material (see p. xiii), thanks to a chance email to the Museum. The staff have been extremely helpful with my enquiries and facilitated my access to the material. Bob Clifford, the Museum's Archivist, dutifully emailed me scans of letters or manuscripts at my request, and kindly ferried me to and from the Museum from the train station on the two occasions when I made it down to Tenterden.

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and encouragement of my supervisors. Christiana Payne and Dinah Roe at Oxford Brookes originated the idea for a project focused on either Stephens or William Michael Rossetti, and gave me their full support when I decided on the former. Their friendly advice and suggestions, both during our supervisor meetings and via email, have helped to shape this thesis, and I could not have asked for better PhD supervisors.

Many others have kindly discussed aspects of my research with me and offered help in various ways, either in person or via email. I wish to thank Judith Bronkhurst, Carolyn Conroy, Pamela Dalziel, John Holmes, Carol Jacobi, Caroline Palmer, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Alison Smith, Katherine Wodehouse, and any others whose names I have forgotten. I am extremely grateful to Rupert Maas for his generosity and for his general encouragement of my project. Suzanne Macgregor, author of the 1988 thesis on Stephens, has also responded kindly to my queries.

Lastly, I want to thank my family and friends who have been there for me throughout this process. My stepfather, Seif, encouraged me to apply for the studentship when I was having doubts. My mother, Philippa, my father, John, my stepmother, Karen, and my sister, Verity, have all been encouraging. Numerous friends have come to hear the name 'Frederic George Stephens' more times than they ever thought they would, in particular Elle and Lewi Field, Francesca Ramsay and Ellen Torfs. Felipe, my boyfriend, has given me happiness, intellectual encouragement and words of support even at those times when I doubted myself. '*Qui bien aime tard oublie.*'

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
Abbreviations	xii
Explanation of Railway Museum Manuscripts	xiii
Introduction	1
The Critical Reception of Stephens’s Art	9
Reassessing Stephens’s Poetry and Prose	15
Chapter 1: Biography	19
Family, Early Years and Education	19
Marriage and Family Life	27
The Final Years	34
Chapter 2: Stephens, the PRB and <i>Morte d’Arthur</i>	39
Founding the Brotherhood and Stephens as an Art Teacher	40
Painting Tennyson: <i>Morte d’Arthur</i>	44
Medieval Dreams: Stephens’s King Arthur Poem	52
Chapter 3: Paintings and Drawings in the Early 1850s	59
Copying Holbein: Stephens’s <i>William Warham</i>	60
‘Patient’ Griselda: <i>The Proposal</i> and its Pre-Raphaelite Context	65
<i>Dethe and the Riotours</i>	77
Chapter 4: Poetry and Early Criticism	84
Stephens’s Keats Poem	85
‘Italian Art’ and ‘Modern Giants’: Essays for <i>The Germ</i>	91
Reviews of the Royal Academy in <i>The Critic</i> in 1851	101
Chapter 5: Portraits and Modern Life	110
Painting Portraits	111
Stephens as Hunt’s Studio Assistant	117
Domestic Tragedy: <i>Mother and Child</i>	121
Chapter 6: Two Publications in <i>The Crayon</i> , 1856–9	134
Music and Masculinity: ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’	136
A Critique of Raphael: ‘On Finish in Art’	147
Chapter 7: ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’: A Pre-Raphaelite Series	157
Defining the Two Pre-Raphaelitisms	159
Describing the Early Italians: Reproductions and Rediscoveries	162
‘The Painful Pencil’: Introducing Modern Pre-Raphaelitism	168

Describing Pre-Raphaelite Paintings	172
Chapter 8: Colour, Music and ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ in Stephens’s Art Criticism in the 1860s	182
Conclusion	194
Bibliography	200
Appendix 1: Catalogue of Paintings and Drawings by Stephens	212
Appendix 2: Pre-Raphaelite Pictures in Stephens’s collection	222
Appendix 3: Poems by Stephens	226
Appendix 4: ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’	237
Appendix 5: A Visit to 10 Hammersmith Terrace	243

List of Figures

Fig. 1: Frederic George Stephens, *Morte d'Arthur*, 1849. Oil on panel (unfinished), 59.5 x 74 cm. Tate.

Fig. 2: Frederic George Stephens, *Mother and Child*, ca. 1854–6. Oil on canvas (unfinished), 47 x 64.1 cm. Tate.

Fig. 3: Frederic George Stephens, *Charles Bridger*, 1855. Oil on canvas (unfinished), 12.8 x 11.5 cm. Formerly Tate collection, present whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 4: Frederic George Stephens, *The Proposal (The Marquis and Griselda)*, 1850–1. Oil on canvas, 80.6 x 64.8 cm. Tate.

Fig. 5: Frederic George Stephens, *Dethe and the Riotours*, 1848–54. Pen and ink on paper, 29.5 x 44.6 cm. Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

Fig. 6: Frederic George Stephens, *Dorothy Mary Stephens (The Artist's Stepmother)*, ca. 1850. Pencil on paper, 19.4 x 17.5 cm. Tate.

Fig. 7: Frederic George Stephens, *Rebecca Clara Stephens*, ca. 1865. Watercolour and gouache on paper, 40 x 34.1 cm. Collection of Dennis T. Lanigan.

Fig. 8: Frederic George Stephens, *Copy of 'William Warham' by Hans Holbein*, 1850. Oil on panel, 81 x 65 cm. New College, University of Oxford.

Fig. 9: Baptism record of Frederic George Stephens, 30 December 1831, St Botolph Aldate, London.

Fig. 10: Joseph Cundall, *Frederic George Stephens*, 1859. Photograph. Reproduced in Jeremy Maas, *The Victorian Art World in Photographs* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1984).

Fig. 11: William Holman Hunt, *Frederic George Stephens*, 1846–7. Oil on panel, 20.3 x 17.5 cm. Tate.

Fig. 12: William Housley, *Rebecca Clara Dalton*, September 1873. Carte de visite. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum.

Fig. 13: Rebecca Clara Stephens, *Card for F. G. Stephens*, 1897. Pencil and coloured inks on card. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum.

Fig. 14: Marriage record for F. G. Stephens and Rebecca Clara Dalton, 8 January 1866, All Hallows Barking, London.

Fig. 15: Unknown photographer, *Holman 'Holly' Fred Stephens*, 1870s. Carte de visite. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, Tenterden, Kent.

Fig. 16: Unknown photographer, *Frederic and Clara Stephens near Port Isaac, Cornwall*, ca. 1903. Photograph. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, Tenterden, Kent.

Fig. 17: Unknown photographer, *F. G. Stephens in Roscarrock, Cornwall, Leaning Against a Wall*, ca. 1903? Photograph. Watts Gallery Library & Archive.

Fig. 18: Unknown photographer, *Frederic and Clara Stephens in 10 Hammersmith Terrace*,

1890s. Watts Gallery Library and Archive.

Fig. 19: Unknown photographer, *F. G. Stephens Sitting in a Garden (10 Hammersmith Terrace?)*, 1904. Photograph postcard.

Fig. 20: Elliott and Fry, *Frederic George Stephens*, ca. 1886–93. Cabinet card. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum.

Fig. 21: Arthur Hughes, after William Holman Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Meeting*, 1848. Current location unknown. Reproduced in *PR&PRB*, 1:101.

Fig. 22: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Two Pages Quarrelling and Figure Studies (Page from a Sketchbook)*, ca. 1849. Pencil on paper, 26.5 x 24.3 cm. Glasgow Museums.

Fig. 23: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 72.4 x 41.9 cm. Tate.

Fig. 24: Sheet inscribed by Frederic George Stephens with ‘Authorities relative to King Arthur’ (left) and an extract from Tennyson’s ‘Morte d’Arthur’ (right), ca. 1849. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum.

Fig. 25: William Holman Hunt, *Rienzi Vowing to Obtain Justice for the Death of his Younger Brother, Slain in a Skirmish between the Colonna and Orsini Factions*, 1848–9. Oil on canvas, 86.4 x 121.9 cm. The Capricorn Foundation.

Fig. 26: Hans Holbein the Younger, *William Warham*, 1527. Oil on panel, 82 x 66 cm. Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 27: Unknown artist, after Hans Holbein, *William Warham*, late 16th century. Oil on panel, 80 x 66 cm. Lambeth Palace, London.

Fig. 28: George Vertue, after Hans Holbein, *William Warham*, 1737. Engraving. National Portrait Gallery.

Fig. 29: Benedetto Pastorini after John Francis Rigaud, *Gualtherus and Griselda*, 1785. Stipple printed in colour on paper, 27 x 21.8 cm. British Museum.

Fig. 30: Alfred Elmore, *Griselda*, 1850. Oil on canvas. Dimensions and present whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 31: Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434. Oil on panel, 82.2 x 60 cm. National Gallery, London.

Fig. 32: Lorenzo Monaco, *San Benedetto Altarpiece (Adoring Saints)*, 1407–9. Egg tempera on wood, 197.2 x 101.5 cm. National Gallery, London.

Fig. 33: John Everett Millais, *The Woodman’s Daughter*, 1850–1. Oil on canvas, 88.9 x 64.8 cm. Guildhall Art Gallery, London.

Fig. 34: John Everett Millais, *Isabella*, 1848–9. Oil on canvas, 109.2 x 142 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Fig. 35: John Everett Millais, *Study for ‘The Woodman’s Daughter’*, 1849. Pencil on paper, 17.8 x 12.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art.

Fig. 36: William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853. Oil on canvas, 76.2 x 55.9 cm. Tate.

Fig. 37: Frederic George Stephens, *Studies for 'Dethé and the Riotours'*, ca. 1848. Pen and ink on paper. The author's collection.

Fig. 38: Frederic George Stephens, *Studies for 'Dethé and the Riotours'*, ca. 1848. Pen and ink on paper. Verso of Fig. 37. The author's collection.

Fig. 39: James Hogg after John Hamilton Mortimer, *Three Gamblers and Time ('The Pardoner's Tale')*, 1787. Etching and engraving, 24 x 18 cm. British Museum.

Fig. 40: John Everett Millais, *The Death of Romeo and Juliet*, 1848. Pen and ink on paper, 21.5 x 36.1 cm. Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery.

Fig. 41: James Collinson, *The Child Jesus*, 1850. Etching proof, 10.2 x 17.5 cm. Tate.

Fig. 42: Elizabeth Siddall, *Pippa Passes*, 1854. Pen and ink on paper 23.4 x 29.8. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 43: Elizabeth Siddall, *Lovers Listening to Music*, 1854. Pen and ink on paper, 23.9 x 29.8 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 44: Manuscript draft of 'To a Cast from the Head of Keats' by Frederic George Stephens. Colonel Stephens Railway Museum.

Fig. 45: Benjamin Robert Haydon, *John Keats*, 1816. Plaster cast of life-mask, 23.5 cm high. National Portrait Gallery, London.

Fig. 46: Carlo Lasinio after (?) Andrea Orcagna, *The Triumph of Death*, 1812. Engraving, 52.2 x 83.1 cm. Hamburg Kunsthalle, Bibliothek.

Fig. 47: James Collinson, *The Renunciation of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary*, 1850. Oil on canvas. Johannesburg Art Gallery.

Fig. 48: James Collinson, *Study of the Head of an Old Woman*, ca. 1850. Pencil and white chalk on paper, 30.4 x 26.6 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 49: John Tenniel, *St Cecilia (Song for St Cecilia's Day)*, 1850. Fresco painting. Upper Waiting Hall, Palace of Westminster.

Fig. 50: Frederic George Stephens, *Dorothy Mary Stephens*, ca. 1852. Oil on canvas, 52 x 38.1 cm. Location unknown.

Fig. 51: William Holman Hunt, *John David Jenkins*, 1851. Oil on panel, 32 x 22 cm. Jesus College, University of Oxford.

Fig. 52: John Everett Millais, *James Wyatt and his Granddaughter, Mary Wyatt*, 1848. Watercolour and pencil on paper, 34.9 x 25.4 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 53: Frederic George Stephens, *Septimus Stephens*, 1852–3. Oil on canvas, arched top, 52 x 38.1 cm. Location unknown.

Fig. 54: William Holman Hunt and Frederic George Stephens, *The Light of the World*, 1853–4. Oil on canvas, arched top, 49.8 x 26.2 cm. Manchester Art Gallery.

Fig. 55: Page 31 from Frederic George Stephens, *William Holman Hunt and His Works* (1860), annotated by Stephens: ‘of which I, F.G.S. painted 99 parts’.

Fig. 56: William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World*, 1851–2. Oil on canvas, arched top, 122 x 60.5 cm. Keble College, University of Oxford.

Fig. 57: Title page of Stephens’s *Holman Hunt and His Works* (1860), annotated by Stephens.

Fig. 58: Detail of Fig. 56.

Fig. 59: Detail of Fig. 54.

Fig. 60: Walter Howell Deverell, *Heads of Two Women (Margaretta [left] and Maria [right] Deverell?)*, 1853. Pencil on paper, 35.7 x 25.7 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

Fig. 61: John Everett Millais, *Retribution*, 1854. Pen and ink on paper, 21.4 x 27.5 cm. British Museum.

Fig. 62: Ford Madox Brown, *Waiting: An English Fireside in the Winter of 1854–55*, 1851–5. Oil on canvas, 30.5 x 20. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Fig. 63: John Everett Millais, *Peace Concluded, 1856*, 1856. Oil on canvas, 91.44 x 116.84. Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts.

Fig. 64: William Holman Hunt, *Annie Miller*, 1853. Black and white chalks, 36.8 x 26.4 cm. The Pollitt Collection.

Fig. 65: John Everett Millais, *Annie Miller*, 1854. Oil on panel. Private collection.

Fig. 66: John Everett Millais, *The Violet’s Message*, 1854. Oil on panel, 25.4 x 19.7. Private collection.

Fig. 67: Augustus Leopold Egg, *Past and Present, No. 1*, 1858. Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 76.2. Tate.

Fig. 68: John Everett Millais, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 64.8 x 50.8 cm. The Makins Collection, Washington, DC.

Fig. 69: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *St Catherine*, 1857. Oil on panel, 34.5 x 25 cm. Tate.

Fig. 70: John Everett Millais, *Head after Raffaella*, ca. early 1850s. Pencil on paper. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 71: John Everett Millais, *Mrs James Wyatt Jr and her Daughter Sarah*, ca. 1850. Oil on panel, 35.3 x 45.7 cm. Tate.

Fig. 72: Cherry stone with 185 carved heads, unknown German maker, ca. 1589. Green Vault, Dresden State Art Museums.

Fig. 73: Figure thought to be of Dionysus from the east pediment of the Parthenon, 438–32 BC. Marble. British Museum.

Fig. 74: Raphael, *The Healing of the Lame Man* (detail), 1515–16. Bodycolour on paper laid onto canvas, 320 x 390 cm. V&A, on loan from the Royal Collection.

Fig. 75: Cosimo Rosselli, *Miracolo del calice* (detail), 1481–6. Fresco. Chiesa de Sant’Ambrogio, Florence.

Fig. 76: John Everett Millais, *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, 1851. Oil on canvas, 88.2 x 54.9 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 77: Detail of Fig. 76. Author’s own photograph.

Fig. 78: Raphael, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, 1515–16. Bodycolour on paper laid onto canvas, 320 x 390 cm. V&A, on loan from the Royal Collection.

Fig. 79: William Holman Hunt, *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 111 x 141 cm. Ashmolean Museum.

Fig. 80: John Everett Millais, *Autumn Leaves*, 1855–6. Oil on canvas, 104.3 x 74 cm. Manchester Art Gallery.

Fig. 81: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Blue Closet*, 1856–7. Watercolour on paper, 35.4 x 26 cm. Tate.

Fig. 82: E. Lapi and F. Livy after Andrea del Castagno, *St Jerome*, ca. 1845. Published in *Galleria dell’I. e Reale Accademia Belle Arti di Firenze* (1845).

Fig. 83: Engraving after Andrea del Castagno, *Crucifixion with Saints*, from Giovanni Rosini’s *Storia della Pittura Italia* (1839–47).

Fig. 84: G. Turchi and G. Bonaini after Fra Angelico, *The Betrayal of Judas (Judas Taking the Thirty Pieces of Silver)*, ca. 1845. Published in *Galleria dell’I. e Reale Accademia Belle Arti di Firenze* (1845).

Fig. 85: F. Lair and F. Livy after Sandro Botticelli, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, ca. 1845. Published in *Galleria dell’I. e Reale Accademia Belle Arti di Firenze* (1845).

Fig. 86: William Holman Hunt, *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*, 1850–1. Oil on canvas, 100.2 x 133.4 cm. Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery.

Fig. 87: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Arthur’s Tomb*, 1855. Watercolour on paper, 24 x 38.2 cm. British Museum.

Fig. 88: Charles Allston Collins, *Convent Thoughts*, 1850–1. Oil on canvas, arched top, 84 x 59 cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 89: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Blue Bower*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 84 x 70.9 cm. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham.

Fig. 90: John Everett Millais, *The Eve of St Agnes*, 1862–3. Oil on canvas, 118.1 x 154.9 cm. The Royal Collection.

Fig. 91: John Everett Millais, *The Black Brunswicker*, 1860. Oil on canvas, 104 x 68.5 cm. Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Fig. 92: John Everett Millais, *Esther*, 1863–5. Oil on canvas, 105.5 x 75 cm. Private collection.

Fig. 93: James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 213 x 107.9 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

Fig. 94: James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White No. 3*, 1865–7. Oil on canvas, 51.4 x 76.9 cm. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations of standard works, manuscript sources and recurring proper names are used throughout the references in this thesis.

Persons

DGR	Dante Gabriel Rossetti
FGS	Frederic George Stephens
HFS	Holman Fred Stephens
JC	James Collinson
JEM	John Everett Millais
RCS	Rebecca Clara Stephens
TW	Thomas Woolner
WHH	William Holman Hunt
WMR	William Michael Rossetti

Manuscripts and Published Sources

ADC	Angeli-Dennis Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia Library, Vancouver.
CDGR	William E. Fredeman, ed., <i>The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i> , 10 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002–15).
CSRM	Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, Tenterden, Kent.
FGSP	F. G. Stephens Papers, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MSS Don. c. 78, d. 116–19, e. 57–87.
<i>Germ</i>	William Michael Rossetti, ed., <i>The Germ: Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art; Being a Facsimile Reprint of the Literary Organ of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1850</i> (London: Elliot Stock, 1901), reprinted by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, with a preface by Andrea Rose (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1992).
JDP	John Durand Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, MssCol 866, Box 4, Folder 3 (letters from FGS to John Durand, 1856–8)
Manson 1920	James Bolivar Manson, <i>Frederic George Stephens and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood</i> (London: Privately printed by Donald Macbeth for the Historic House, Fleet Street, 1920).
PR&PRB	William Holman Hunt, <i>Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood</i> , 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1905).
PRBJ	William Michael Rossetti, <i>The P.R.B. Journal: William Michael Rossetti's Diary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1849–1853</i> , ed. William E. Fredeman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
WHHF	William Holman Hunt Fonds, Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia Library, Vancouver.

Explanation of Railway Museum Manuscripts

Early on in the research process I discovered that a large collection of F. G. Stephens's papers, previously unknown to scholars, has been preserved in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum in Tenterden, Kent. The collection includes correspondence between Stephens and his family, and incoming letters from a wide range of Victorian artists and authors. Some two hundred letters exchanged between Stephens and his wife Clara provide new insights into their relationship. Bob Clifford, the Museum's Archivist, estimates that there are at least 1,000 letters in the collection (correspondence with the author, 31 March 2017). In addition, there are several poem manuscripts written by Stephens during the early years of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (see Appendix 3). There are also photographs, press cuttings and other paraphernalia relating to the Pre-Raphaelite circle; some of the photographs are included in this thesis and have never been published before. An inventory of the entire contents of Stephens's house was made after the death of Clara Stephens in 1915, and lists all the paintings, prints, furniture and *objets d'art* which the Stephenses collected (see Appendix 4).

The story of how this material came to be in such an unlikely location is given here for the first time. Stephens's only child, Lt. Col. Holman Fred Stephens, an engineer and manager of light railways, died unmarried and without an heir in 1931. His father's papers (together with a number of artworks by Stephens, Arthur Hughes, Ford Madox Brown and Lawrence Alma-Tadema) passed to one of the executors of his will, Mr James Arthur Iggulden. Iggulden was the chief clerk of Holman's railway office in Tonbridge, Kent. In 1957, at the suggestion of Rosalie Glynn Grylls, Lady Mander, Iggulden sold the bulk of the Stephens papers to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for £400. The other material described above remained in Iggulden's possession until his death in 1979. The collection was then deposited by Philip Shaw in the small museum dedicated to the legacy of Holman Stephens and his railways, located in Tenterden in Kent, which opened in the 1990s. The papers were filed away unorganised in cabinets in the museum's loft, and it was only in 2015 that Bob Clifford set about cataloguing them. Thanks to his exhaustive efforts, assigning an individual record number to each item, I have been able to utilise this new collection for the first time and spread awareness of it for future research. All references begin with CSRM followed by the document number.

Introduction

This thesis presents a new assessment of the art and writings of Frederic George Stephens, one of the seven founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB), and considers the ways in which he contributed to the development of literary and artistic Pre-Raphaelitism between 1848 and 1870. Stephens was an active participant in the Pre-Raphaelite circle, with a lifelong commitment to communicating their ideals to the public. Despite his centrality, Stephens has remained a marginal figure in Pre-Raphaelite studies, frequently quoted from but never considered as an independent subject in his own right. I will redress this imbalance by re-examining him as a crucial contributor to the visual and literary culture of the PRB. For his art, I will consider what makes it Pre-Raphaelite: not only its aesthetic qualities, but also the themes and subjects which were shared with the other members of the Brotherhood. For Stephens's writings, I will stress the importance of his art criticism as up-to-the-moment commentaries on the latest developments in the Pre-Raphaelite movement, from the early 1850s through to the emergence of Aestheticism in the 1860s.

For this reassessment my methodological approach has been partly empirical. Most of the primary historical materials connected to Stephens and his work, particularly his letters to his fellow PRBs, have not generally been consulted by scholars. This is not the case with the other major Pre-Raphaelites. We know how John Everett Millais painted his *Ophelia*, or William Holman Hunt his *The Light of the World*, or Dante Gabriel Rossetti his *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (to select three random examples), because the primary sources which record these processes have already been utilised by art historians.¹ With the exception of Millais, there have been catalogue raisonnés published about many of the 'leading lights' of Pre-Raphaelitism.² The

¹ See John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*, 2 vols (London: Methuen and Co., 1899), 1:117–20, 122, 144–45, for JEM's *Ophelia*; Judith Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 1:150–54, for WHH's *Light of the World*; Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 1:10, for DGR's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*.

² Bronkhurst, *Hunt*; Surtees, *Rossetti*; Mary Bennett, *Ford Madox Brown: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010). See also Leonard Roberts, *Arthur Hughes: His Life and*

same does not apply to Stephens's neglected artworks – there has been no serious attempt to consider how he went about creating *Morte d'Arthur* (Fig. 1), or the modern-life subject *Mother and Child* (Fig. 2), in the same manner, using of the same kinds of contemporary sources. Therefore, I believe it is necessary, and reasonable, for my study of Stephens's literary and artistic productions to take a documentary approach, actively using the archival material which I have researched. However, I will also consider his paintings and drawings both as self-contained works of art, and within the broader context of Pre-Raphaelite production. Many of Stephens's articles and essays examined in this thesis have never been reprinted and are being discussed here for the first time. I have also discovered several previously unrecorded poem manuscripts by Stephens, dating from the active period of the PRB (1848 until about 1853), which provide new insights into his contributions to the development of Pre-Raphaelite poetry.

By the end of 1853, PRB was 'in its decadence'. James Collinson had resigned from the group in 1850 because of his religious differences. Thomas Woolner had emigrated to Australia in 1852; the following year, Millais was elected an associate of the Royal Academy (RA), the institution whose artistic teachings the group had originally rejected. Hunt was planning a painting expedition to the Holy Land (he left in January 1854). D. G. Rossetti rarely exhibited in public after 1850 and painted small watercolours for private patrons, while his brother William Michael became a professional art critic. In response to these changes, Christina Rossetti wrote a sonnet gently mocking the PRB's dissolution and disillusionment in November 1853. Among the men just mentioned, Christina evoked the following image:

Calm Stephens in the twilight smokes his pipe,
But long the dawning of his public day.³

Rossetti's depiction of a contemplative figure distanced from the glare of the public eye as a kind of silent observer, now seems almost prophetic. For the life and work of F. G. Stephens has remained more or less 'in the twilight' since his death in 1907.

The title of this thesis uses Juliette Atkinson's definition of 'hidden' as a more nuanced

Work: A Catalogue Raisonné (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1997); Betty Elzea, *Frederick Sandys, 1829–1904: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2001).

³ Christina Rossetti, 'The P.R.B.', in *PRBJ*, 123–24 (Appendix 6), ll. 7–8.

term for describing a historical individual than simply ‘lost’, ‘forgotten’ or ‘neglected’. ‘[T]he ranks of the “hidden”’, Atkinson writes, ‘could be said to include [...] men or women who were once famous but whose renown has dissipated’.⁴ It suggests a more immediate sense of rediscovery and echoes Christina Rossetti’s image of a private, thoughtful but prolific figure obscured from view, whose ‘public day’ is soon to dawn. My title also acknowledges Stephens’s dual role within the Pre-Raphaelite circle as both a maker of art and an interpreter of the artworks which the Pre-Raphaelites produced. This particular combination is unique among the PRBs. D. G. Rossetti, Woolner and Collinson all published poetry, and W. M. Rossetti, who was not a formally trained artist, wrote prodigiously about Pre-Raphaelitism throughout his life. Yet Stephens fulfils the criterion of being a practising artist who also wrote art criticism. D. G. Rossetti recognised this in a letter to Thomas Hall Caine in 1880: ‘dear staunch Stephens [...] holds the honourable position of being the only living art-critic who has really himself worked through the Art-Schools practically and learnt to draw and paint’.⁵

Stephens himself was conscious of this duality. The record for his marriage to Rebecca Clara Dalton in January 1866 (a decade or so after he is presumed to have abandoned his art career) lists his rank or profession as ‘Artist’. In the 1871 census he is described as an ‘Artist, Painter & Author’, and his death certificate gives his occupation as ‘Artist and Author’. These are titles which he would have chosen himself. They are in keeping with the Pre-Raphaelite spirit of intermediality, according equal importance to art and literature together rather than prioritising one medium over another. This thesis will reassess the long-standing opinion that Stephens should be remembered for his art criticism rather than for his art, and that his early artistic training had no bearing on his literary career. He was clearly adamant, even in old age, that his vocation as a painter should not be forgotten. As the earlier chapters of this thesis will demonstrate, Stephens’s artistic and literary practices overlapped in the 1850s. His art is defined by a predilection for subjects derived from literature (Malory, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Tennyson), while

⁴ Juliette Atkinson, *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth Century ‘Hidden’ Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3.

⁵ DGR to Thomas Hall Caine, 13 June 1880, in *CDGR*, 9:204, which continues: ‘He is one of my oldest and best friends, of whom few can be numbered at my age’.

in his writing he developed a richly descriptive style which emphasised the aesthetic experience of looking at Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Dianne Sachko Macleod has observed, in one of the few secondary sources on Stephens, that ‘to view him solely as an ambassador of Pre-Raphaelite principles is to miss the significant contribution he made to the wider realm of art literature’.⁶ Paola Spinozzi seconds this: ‘It would [...] be misleading to associate [Stephens] exclusively with Pre-Raphaelite art, as the wide range of his publications evidences deep knowledge of Victorian aesthetics’.⁷ Stephens’s art monographs encompass a wide range of nineteenth-century artists beyond the immediate Pre-Raphaelite circle: Lawrence Alma-Tadema, James Clark Hook, Edwin Landseer, William Mulready and Samuel Palmer, to name a few. His reviews of the RA summer exhibitions in the *Athenaeum* (for which he was the chief art critic from February 1860 until the early 1900s), are familiar in scholarship on various aspects of Victorian art. However, given the scale of Stephens’s output – his articles for the *Athenaeum* alone are around two thousand in number – this thesis will focus on the ways in which he promoted and analysed Pre-Raphaelitism in the earlier stage of his career, in the 1850s. Stephens was proud of his involvement with the Brotherhood as a young man, and acknowledged that it had exerted a formative influence on his writing, writing to W. M. Rossetti decades later: ‘By the inner principles of P[re]-R[aphaelit]ism my life has been & is still guided’.⁸ The chapters of my thesis are structured to reflect the development of Stephens’s career, examining in turn his efforts as an artist and a writer. A new history is therefore presented, one that reconsiders the Pre-Raphaelite movement from 1848 until late 1860s from the vantage point of a central but hidden individual, through the images he created and the writings he published.

Stephens was one of two members of the PRB who became professional critics in the periodical press: the other was W. M. Rossetti. Despite their shared occupations, and the fact that both men tirelessly promoted Pre-Raphaelitism in their books and articles, Rossetti has been the

⁶ Dianne Sachko Macleod, ‘F. G. Stephens: Pre-Raphaelite Critic and Art Historian’, *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 999 (June 1986): 398–406.

⁷ Paola Spinozzi and Elisa Bizzotto, *The Germ: Origins and Progenies of Pre-Raphaelite Interart Aesthetics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012), 54.

⁸ FGS to WMR, 3 August 1899, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

more studied. A generous selection of his letters was published in 1990, edited by Roger Peattie, who has also published numerous articles on Rossetti, while Julie L'Enfant's major study of 1999 offered a comprehensive assessment of Rossetti's art criticism.⁹ In 2003, Rossetti was (along with his wife Lucy Madox Brown) the subject of a biography by Angela Thirlwell.¹⁰ Like Stephens, Rossetti's literary career was launched by his contributions to the PRB's short-lived magazine, *The Germ: Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art*, in 1850. Rossetti wrote articles on art and literature for the *Critic* (1850–6), the *Spectator* (1850–8), *Fraser's Magazine* (1861–5) and the *Academy* (1869–78), among others.¹¹ He contributed to the *Athenaeum* as an occasional reviewer of literature from 1878–95.¹² In 1886 Rossetti published *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, the first of several volumes dedicated to the art, poetry and carefully edited correspondence of his siblings. These were followed by *Ruskin: Rossetti: Preraphaelitism: Papers 1854 to 1862* (1899) and *Preraphaelite Diaries and Letters* (1900), giving overviews of the Pre-Raphaelite movement through the documents of its founders and associates; as well as a facsimile reprint of the *Germ* in 1901 and a memoir, *Some Reminiscences*, in 1906. In these books Rossetti asserted himself as the Pre-Raphaelites' leading archivist, editor and documentarian; he was conscious of the value of 'solid documentary materials [...] duly ordered and annotated' that he was compiling for posterity.¹³ Accordingly, he has been consulted by literary and art historians as a reliable primary source: Thirlwell asserts that 'as promoter, transcriber, writer and editor, W. M. Rossetti invented our view of the Pre-Raphaelites'.¹⁴

Stephens has not received the same attention, even if, in Macleod's view, he 'is second only to William Michael Rossetti as a primary source of information about the original goals of

⁹ Roger W. Peattie, ed., *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Julie L'Enfant, *William Rossetti's Art Criticism: The Search for Truth in Victorian Art* (University Press of America, 1999).

¹⁰ Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹¹ Peattie, *Selected Letters*, xviii.

¹² Roger Peattie, 'William Michael's Rossetti's Contributions to *The Athenaeum*', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 148–55.

¹³ William Michael Rossetti, ed., *Ruskin: Rossetti: Preraphaelitism: Papers 1854 to 1862* (London: George Allen, 1899), x.

¹⁴ Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 1.

the Brotherhood'.¹⁵ He did not leave behind a memoir of his own. He preferred to be a writer of biographies rather than a subject of one and shied away from discussing his personal life even with his friends. It was because of this concern for privacy that, in August 1906, only six months before his death, he contemplated destroying his diaries.¹⁶ He confided to Rossetti that he did 'feel qualms' about doing so, as the diaries 'abound[ed] in heart-touching things concerning many a good and true friend' and were a 'hardly broken series of notes' dating back more than fifty years.¹⁷ Rossetti advised him against this, particularly as the diaries did not contain any attacks on individuals, but Stephens had made up his mind: 'I find [...] that they are so very unreserved as to my own life and my family and fortunes that they had better go'.¹⁸ By destroying his diaries, he only added to his posthumous obscurity; the journals of a founding member of the PRB who was also widely connected within the Victorian art world would no doubt have been coveted during the major phase of Pre-Raphaelite scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century, which saw the publication of W. M. Rossetti's *PRB Journal* (1975) and the diaries of George Price Boyce (1980) and Ford Madox Brown (1981).

Stephens's name was overshadowed in the many general surveys of Pre-Raphaelitism in the twentieth century, which tended to focus on the careers and private lives of Millais, Hunt and D. G. Rossetti in particular, the three 'leading lights' of the PRB. In the catalogue for the landmark exhibition on the Pre-Raphaelites at the Tate Gallery in 1984, Alan Bowness began his introduction with the astonishing statement that of the seven founding members 'only three really count' – despite the fact that the exhibition included works of art by all seven PRBs.¹⁹ Stephens was lost in a crowd of lively historical figures and oft-repeated anecdotes rather than standing out as an individual with a biography and creativity of his own. John Dixon Hunt's study *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, 1848–1900* (1968) went so far as to suggest that Stephens (along with

¹⁵ Macleod, 'Stephens', 399.

¹⁶ FGS to WMR, 21 August 1906, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10: 'Nevertheless, I could not, even in order to refute the falsehoods of Holman Hunt, produce this diary which is replete with personal and private matters and must be destroyed'.

¹⁷ FGS to WMR, 24 August 1906, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10.

¹⁸ FGS to WMR, 24 September 1906, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10.

¹⁹ Leslie Parris, ed., *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Publishing, 1984), 11.

Woolner and Collinson) ‘faded from the picture as soon as the divergent and stronger energies of the central figures emerged and destroyed the Brotherhood’s unity’ in the mid-1850s – a generalisation which is contradicted by the abundant surviving correspondence between Stephens and the other Pre-Raphaelites, and by Stephens’s lifelong dedication to praising and analysing Pre-Raphaelitism in his writing.²⁰

My research into Stephens will make an original and substantial contribution to the resurgence of interest in Pre-Raphaelite studies over the past thirty years. Subsequent literature has examined Pre-Raphaelitism in a variety of historical and theoretical frameworks: from general studies such as Jan Marsh’s *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (1985), Tim Barringer’s *The Pre-Raphaelites: Reading the Image* (1998) and Elizabeth Prettejohn’s *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (2000); to essay collections including *Pre-Raphaelites Re-viewed*, edited by Marcia Pointon (1989), *Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites*, edited by Ellen Harding (1996), and *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Text, Subtext, Context*, edited by Michaela Giebelhausen and Tim Barringer (2009). Publications in the twenty-first century have further encouraged interdisciplinary approaches to the movement, with Prettejohn declaring in her introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (2012) that ‘the study of the Pre-Raphaelites [is] important in the scholarly disciplines of both art history and English literature’.²¹ These are but some of the many titles that have been published on several different aspects of the movement in recent years, both literary and art historical. However, Stephens appears very little in any of them.

Pre-Raphaelite poetry and prose has been collected in several anthologies since the 1970s, but Stephens’s writings are underrepresented or even absent in each case. *Pre-Raphaelite Writing*, edited by Derek Stanford (1973), only includes his first essay for the *Germ* magazine in 1850, ‘The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art’.²² He is left out of the ‘Criticism’ section of the anthology, which reprints essays by William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne and W. M.

²⁰ John Dixon Hunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination, 1848–1900* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 2. FGS is mentioned only three times in this book.

²¹ Elizabeth Prettejohn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11.

²² Frederic George Stephens (pseudonym ‘John Seward’), ‘The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art’, *Germ*, 58–64. This essay will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Rossetti from the 1860s and 1870s that reflect on Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry. The last two writers possess ‘the special importance of being pronouncements upon Pre-Raphaelite effort from the very midst of that charmed circle’, Stanford writes, forgetting that Stephens had been central to Pre-Raphaelitism and published on the subject several years before Swinburne entered the scene in the early 1860s.²³ In *An Anthology of Pre-Raphaelite Writings*, edited by Carolyn Hares-Stryker (1997), Stephens is nowhere to be found, mentioned only in passing in the introduction as ‘Hunt’s pupil, [...] who had little talent, indeed had never painted a picture, but had much enthusiasm’.²⁴ The four-volume *Pre-Raphaelites: Writings and Sources*, edited by Inga Bryden (1998), fares better, featuring four texts by Stephens: his two *Germ* articles and extracts from his monographs on Hunt (1860) and D. G. Rossetti (1894). Bryden’s introduction acknowledges Stephens’s contribution to the Pre-Raphaelite movement as a critic, but the general scope of the anthology limits a detailed analysis of his work.

Indispensable primary sources for my research have included the *PRB Journal* which was published by William E. Fredeman in 1975. This diary of the Brotherhood’s artistic, literary and general activities between 1849 and 1853 provides information, for example, about Stephens’s progress in painting *The Proposal* and his involvement with the *Germ*. Also fundamental to this project is the substantial collection of Stephens’s papers in the Bodleian Library. The collection comprises letters from artists, fellow critics, museum directors, editors, members of the public and family and friends, as well as Stephens’s manuscript drafts for obituaries and articles. They are arranged across 36 albums, each containing upwards of a hundred documents. Individual albums contain letters from Hunt, Woolner, Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones and Alma-Tadema. The letters from the Rossetti brothers have been published partially in Peattie’s *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti*, and completely in the ten-volume *Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, edited by William E. Fredeman (2002–15). The majority of the remaining papers have not been transcribed until now, because of the vastness of the collection.

²³ Derek Stanford, ed., *Pre-Raphaelite Writing: An Anthology* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1973), 161.

²⁴ Carolyn Hares-Stryker, *An Anthology of Pre-Raphaelite Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 19.

The sheer scope and quantity of Stephens's published writings spanning numerous periodicals, and the difficulty of accessing them, has daunted previous researchers. Macleod rightly observed in 1986 that Stephens 'is not cited as often [as W. M. Rossetti] because many of his most important observations are buried in ephemeral periodicals and exhibition catalogues'.²⁵ Since then, these periodicals have been fully digitised and made accessible online, greatly assisting the researcher's task of finding Stephens's articles. Where once the process of sifting through physical copies in libraries and archives was a considerable effort, now Stephens's texts can be located with ease. His prodigious output can therefore be reinstated within the canon of Pre-Raphaelite literature.

The Critical Reception of Stephens's Art

As I mentioned earlier, Stephens consciously maintained his dual image as artist and author later in life. In his 1894 monograph on D. G. Rossetti, he reflected: 'having been stringently trained in the practice of Art, I found the experience thus won to be of great value in the profession of an Art-critic, into which "gentle craft" I gradually drifted, and so remain'.²⁶ He therefore felt that his early artistic phase, lasting for about a decade from the late 1840s through to the late 1850s, gave him a unique perspective for his writing, in that he was an art critic who had received practical training as a painter. However, although he was proud of his former career, he never wrote in any detail about his own work. Even in those letters which were written during a particular artwork's creation, he seldom discussed his ideas in any detail. He was frequently evasive, and this refusal to give details carried over into his published writings, in which he never refers to any of his own works. Even when he wrote to W. M. Rossetti in 1899 about the circumstances in which he painted *The Proposal* at Sevenoaks back in 1850, he referred cursorily to it as 'some painting of mine'.²⁷

In addition to Stephens's silence about his own work, almost nothing was written about

²⁵ Macleod, 'Stephens', 399.

²⁶ Frederic George Stephens, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Seeley & Co., 1894), 18.

²⁷ FGS to WMR, 11 November 1889, ADC, Box 14, Folder 8.

his art at the time: even when he exhibited his portraits at the RA, they did not attract the attention of any reviewers, being overshadowed by more impressive paintings by his fellow PRBs. After 1854, when the portrait of his father was exhibited, his work was not seen again in public until long after his death. Consequently, there is very little in the way of a nineteenth-century critical discourse, either by Stephens or his contemporaries, upon which to build the present discussion of his art; a problem which does not face many other Pre-Raphaelite artists, about whom much was written in their own time. It is therefore useful to briefly examine the limited reception of his work among his contemporaries and subsequent critics.

Most accounts do acknowledge Stephens's beginnings as an art student, but typically only as a brief youthful phase and often without showing examples of his work. Esther Wood was apparently the first to write favourably about the subject in 1894, stating that Stephens 'produced in youth some work of high quality on strictly Pre-Raphaelite lines'.²⁸ Although she falls short of naming any examples, it is worth recognising that she was admiring Stephens's work from outside the close-knit Pre-Raphaelite circle, or what remained of it in the 1890s. It is to be wondered how she managed to see Stephens's pictures in order to form this judgement; the only way she could have done so would have been to visit his home at 10 Hammersmith Terrace. Yet Stephens's visitors were not even guaranteed to see his works if they were not on show. Indeed, five years later, Percy Bate expressed regret that his book *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters* did not include 'an example of [Stephens's] pictorial art' among its illustrations, noting that it 'was found impossible' to acquire a reproduction.²⁹

W. M. Rossetti's memoirs, published in 1906, described Stephens in 1848 as 'an art-student who had not as yet advanced to the point of painting any picture adapted for exhibition [...] As a painter he produced in the early days two or three good portraits on a small scale, but nothing else of note'.³⁰ Rossetti revised his opinion of 'nothing else of note' when he wrote the obituary for Stephens in the *Athenaeum* the following year, reporting that his old friend 'began in

²⁸ Esther Wood, *Dante Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1894), 120.

²⁹ Percy Bate, *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters* (London: George Bell & Son, 1905), 52.

³⁰ William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1906), 1:68.

1849 an oil picture of King Arthur and Sir Bedivere [Fig. 1] (following Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur"), but did not carry it to execution'.³¹ Rossetti's emphasis on the Tennyson influence appears to hint at the novelty of a Pre-Raphaelite depiction of an Arthurian, Tennysonian subject at such an early date, although he refrains from giving an opinion of the painting itself. Rossetti also recalled that Stephens 'intended to be an oil painter of figure subjects, and was fully imbued with the principles of the Brotherhood', also reiterated his earlier statement that Stephens 'executed two or three good portraits on a small scale'.³²

Percy Bate's desire to see Stephens's paintings reproduced was fulfilled in 1920, when the artist's son, Lt. Col. Holman Fred Stephens, commissioned a portfolio monograph of 24 pictures from his father's art collection, including four paintings by Stephens himself – the first time they had been published.³³ When the book was reviewed in the *Athenaeum*, Stephens's *Mother and Child* (Fig. 2) was warmly described as being 'characteristic of its period and of the Pre-Raphaelite reaction', and 'a remarkable achievement' given Stephens's youthfulness when he painted it.³⁴ Another reviewer in *Notes and Queries* felt that Stephens's portraits of his parents were 'full of sympathetic feeling'.³⁵ Holman had therefore generated a newfound, if brief, interest in his father's art, which he supplemented by lending some of the paintings to the Tate Gallery in the 1920s.³⁶

Ultimately, however, such notable mentions are few and far between. After Holman Stephens's death in 1931, his father's artworks were relegated to the side lines of Pre-Raphaelite

³¹ William Michael Rossetti, 'F. G. Stephens', *Athenaeum*, no. 4142 (16 March 1907): 329.

³² *Ibid.*, 329. WMR summarises these 'principles' of the PRB as 'truthful and thoughtful invention of subject, heedful observation of the appearances of nature, and rigid study and reproduction of them in detail'. He also acknowledges FGS's role 'for a long series of years [...] at the head of the art instruction in University College School, and his pupils stood high in many competitions' – a subject which I have been unable to examine in this thesis.

³³ James Bolivar Manson, *Frederick George Stephens and the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers* (London: Privately printed by Donald Macbeth at the Historic House, Fleet Street, 1920). Published in a small edition of 240 copies. The paintings by FGS reproduced were *The Proposal*, *Mother and Child* and the portraits of his parents.

³⁴ *Athenaeum* no. 4737 (11 February 1921), 161.

³⁵ *Notes and Queries* (28 May 1921), 440.

³⁶ The *Athenaeum* review in note 34 mentions that *Mother and Child* was then on display at the National Gallery of Art at Millbank. A note from the British National Gallery dated 27 February 1920 and headed 'Pictures belonging to Lt-Col. H. F. Stephens, to be returned on March 2', lists two paintings by FGS on loan to the Gallery: *North Foreland* and the portrait of Septimus Stephens; CSR.M.

history. They also suffered from physical obscurity: the five pictures Holman bequeathed to the Tate Gallery in 1932 were rarely exhibited in public, and one painting (the small portrait of Charles Bridger; Fig. 3) was even stolen and destroyed while on loan to Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1960. Those scholars who did address Stephens's art did so without much enthusiasm. Basil Taylor, writing in 1948, did detect in Stephens's *Mother and Child* (his 'best painting') an air of 'detachment' which he felt connected it to other paintings by Millais, Hunt, D. G. Rossetti, Madox Brown, Henry Wallis and William Lindsay Windus. However, Taylor concluded that Stephens would have had more success at creating such works 'if he had been a handier painter'.³⁷

Taylor was not alone in characterising Stephens as lacking in ability or enthusiasm. William Gaunt's *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*, first published in 1942, introduces Stephens by saying that he 'might also learn to paint one day if he had time and ability', and makes no reference to any of his pictures at any point in the book.³⁸ Rosalie Glynn Grylls's 1964 biography of Rossetti not only gets Stephens's name wrong ('Frederic James Stephens'), but also asserts that he was 'not much of a painter but a talker, "the rhetorical cripple"'.³⁹ Seven years later, John Nicoll wrote that Stephens 'produced few paintings and most of them are painfully laboured and contrived', also incorrectly stating that the artist ceased to paint altogether after 1850.⁴⁰ Timothy Hilton's popular introduction to Pre-Raphaelitism, also published in 1970 and reprinted many times, does not refer to any of Stephens's pictures.⁴¹ Similarly, Raymond Watkinson's study *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* ignores Stephens's art and mentions him only eight times throughout the book in a cursory fashion.⁴² In 1986, Dianne Sachko Macleod concluded that 'scholars have quite justifiably paid scant attention to Stephens's awkward attempts at painting', also describing his picture *The Proposal* (Fig. 4) as 'rigid and uninspired' and relegating his oeuvre to a

³⁷ Basil Taylor, 'F. G. Stephens and the P.R.B.', *Architectural Review* 104, no. 622 (October 1948): 172.

³⁸ William Gaunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1942, revised 1975), 223.

³⁹ Rosalie Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti* (London: Feffer and Sons, 1964), 25.

⁴⁰ John Nicoll, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), 30.

⁴¹ Timothy Hilton, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), 32: 'Frederick [sic] George Stephens, a youth whose studies had not progressed beyond the R.A. Antique School. He had never painted a picture' – the only mention of Stephens's artistic career in the book.

⁴² Raymond Watkinson, *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design* (London: Studio Vista, 1970).

footnote.⁴³

Mary Susan Duval's unpublished doctoral thesis on Stephens in 1988 was the first text to seriously and sympathetically examine Stephens as an artist. However, the discussion of the subject is limited to the first chapter, with the paintings briefly examined in quick succession.⁴⁴ There are also notable omissions, such as *Dethe and the Riotours*, Stephens's largest surviving drawing, now in the Ashmolean Museum (Fig. 5), which will be addressed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Duval does reach a conclusion: 'From the beginning of his training Stephens seems to have lagged behind his friends in technique, and never managed to finish a picture to his satisfaction, either because he lacked self-confidence or insisted too intently on perfection'.⁴⁵ While the latter is true, there is evidence that Stephens was able to successfully complete a number of commissioned portraits in the 1850s – an aspect of his career that is being discussed here for the first time.

All the above writers share the opinion that Stephens should be remembered for his writing rather than for his art, as if both cannot be admired equally, in their own right or in dialogue with one another. It evidently became the norm to dismiss Stephens's work, perhaps without even properly examining his pictures. The idea that scholars are 'justified' in disregarding an artist's entire body of work, simply because it does not meet the high standards of artists of greater calibre, now seems dismissive and even reductive. More generally, too, art historical studies have progressed beyond the notion that only 'good' art is worthy of consideration. A notable example of this change of perspective is the case of Elizabeth Siddall, the artist, poet and model whose work was once regarded as 'naïve' and merely derivative of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Siddall has since become, in Tim Barringer's words, 'the subject of study that has productively exhumed her from under Rossetti's shadow and biography and cast her remarkable art and poetry in a new, more generous light'.⁴⁶ That Stephens struggled with the technicalities of painting and

⁴³ Macleod, 'Stephens', 398.

⁴⁴ Mary Susan Duval, 'An Examination of the Work of F. G. Stephens (1828–1907) as Artist and Art Critic' (PhD diss., University of London, 1988), 16–38.

⁴⁵ Duval, 'Stephens', 17.

⁴⁶ Tim Barringer, Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde* (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), 73.

did not always see a picture through to completion is not in doubt. Nevertheless, much can be gained by closely examining the subject matter and iconography of his work which encapsulates a number of key Pre-Raphaelite themes, such as medievalism, modern life, class issues and the place of women in Victorian society. Equally present is the symbiosis of literature and art that is central to Pre-Raphaelite painting (*Morte d'Arthur* and *The Proposal* illustrate poems by Tennyson and Chaucer). My thesis will enlarge the discussion of Stephens's art across several chapters for a more in-depth consideration of his paintings and drawings. This has been achieved by using unpublished primary material and examining the pictures themselves both on their own terms and in the wider context of Pre-Raphaelite production.

The present century has begun to treat Stephens's art with more sympathy. In 2003, *The Proposal* and *Mother and Child* were included in an exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite works from the Tate collection which toured to Australia, New Zealand and the USA. These two paintings have been exhibited before the general public at Tate Britain at regular intervals.⁴⁷ *Dethe and the Riotours* was included in the exhibition *The Poetry of Drawing* at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2011.⁴⁸ The sketch of Dorothy Mary Stephens (Fig. 6) was part of a display of Pre-Raphaelite works on paper at Tate Britain in 2014–16. A watercolour portrait of Stephens's wife Clara (Fig. 7) from the 1860s appeared in an exhibition of works on paper from the collection of Dennis T. Lanigan, at Leighton House and the National Gallery of Canada in 2015–16.⁴⁹ Most recently, in December 2018, *The Proposal* was sent to Australia a second time for the exhibition *Love and Desire: Pre-Raphaelite Masterpieces from the Tate Collection*, held at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.⁵⁰ In the course of my research I rediscovered a copy of a portrait of William Warham by Holbein which Stephens painted in 1850 (Fig. 8), together with letters and archival documents giving an insight into his

⁴⁷ At the time of writing (6 September 2019) *Mother and Child* is on display in Gallery 9 at Tate Britain.

⁴⁸ Colin Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 235.

⁴⁹ *Beauty's Awakening: Drawings by the Pre-Raphaelites and their Contemporaries from the Lanigan Collection*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa and Leighton House, London, 2015–16, erroneously exhibited as *Portrait of Clare [sic] Stephens*. The catalogue states that RCS changed her name to 'Clare' after her marriage to FGS in 1866, but there is no evidence to support this and her surviving letters in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum are all signed 'Clara'.

⁵⁰ 14 December 2019 – 28 April 2019. The exhibition then travelled to the Palazzo Reale in Milan.

work on the replica. This thesis therefore takes advantage of this growing of visibility, with the hope that future research will bring more of Stephens's obscured works – particularly his numerous portrait commissions of the 1850s – to light once again.

Reassessing Stephens's Poetry and Prose

This thesis not only presents a reassessment of Stephens's published writings, but also introduces several poem manuscripts by him which I have discovered. One fragment in the Bodleian Library, fair copies of two lyric poems in the Library of the South African National Gallery, and several further drafts in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, display the author's early attempts at writing verse. They can all be dated to the early years of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, from about 1849–50. The South African manuscripts have been transcribed by Jerome McGann for the online Rossetti Archive and the Bodleian fragment was helpfully copied out by Mary Susan Duval for her 1988 thesis; I have transcribed the Railway Museum manuscripts and collected the texts into an appendix at the end of this thesis.⁵¹

None of the poems have been properly published or analysed, so there is no secondary literature beyond the texts themselves. Their fragmentary state and general incompleteness testify to Stephens's struggles with carrying a poem through to completion. Nevertheless, some of the verses achieve a new importance when their Pre-Raphaelite context is considered. Two are of particular interest: an attempted epic inspired by the mythology of King Arthur which is mentioned in W. M. Rossetti's *PRB Journal* in July 1849, and which Stephens wrote alongside his painting *Morte d'Arthur* (Fig. 1); and an unfinished sonnet, 'To a Cast from the Head of Keats', which communicates the Brotherhood's veneration of the Romantic poet who inspired so many of their artworks.⁵² These poems will be examined in Chapters 2 and 4 respectively. Poetry has rightly been viewed as the Pre-Raphaelites' primary mode of literary expression, and Stephens's manuscripts confirm that, indeed, all the members of the PRB wrote verse at one time

⁵¹ Appendix 3. Frederic George Stephens, 'Two Poems by F. G. Stephens', in The Rossetti Archive, ed. Jerome McGann, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/stephens003.raw.html>; Duval, 'Stephens', 315, Appendix A.

⁵² *PRBJ*, 10 (26 July 1849): 'At Stephens's we read over his poem of Arthur'.

or another. The poems also carry implications for Stephens's prose, which, particularly when he was writing about an artist or work of art whom he really admired, becomes poetical.

The second half of this thesis explores Stephens's published writings which frequently anticipate later developments in Victorian art criticism. Indeed, Stephens can be credited with a number of 'firsts' which have not previously been recognised by scholars. He issued the earliest Pre-Raphaelite response to Jan van Eyck, the fifteenth-century Flemish artist whose *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) was a source of inspiration for many Pre-Raphaelite painters.⁵³ This came in the form of a short story, 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror', which was published in the American journal *The Crayon* in 1856 and which has never been examined by scholars. Under the guise of historical fiction, it functions as a manifesto for Pre-Raphaelite painting practices, casting van Eyck as a forebear of the PRB's ideals and methods. Similarly, Stephens analysed the work of Raphael in an essay for the *Crayon*, 'On Finish in Art'. It is taken as a given that the Pre-Raphaelites were critical of Raphael, but it is difficult to find any direct criticisms of the High Renaissance master by them before 1856, when Stephens penned the article. In particular, he made an example of the highly regarded Raphael Cartoons as the progenitor of artistic indolence and falseness in the early sixteenth century. Both this article and the van Eyck story will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The *Crayon* was also the vehicle for Stephens's most important literary work of the 1850s, a lengthy study entitled 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', which is the subject of Chapter 7. Published in eight instalments from 1856–7, it was at that time the longest and most ambitious original text written about the Pre-Raphaelite movement by one of its founding members, combining Stephens's knowledge of art history with lyrical ekphrastic descriptions of works by Millais, Hunt, Rossetti, Woolner, Madox Brown and others, some of which were being described in print for the first time. 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' can also be situated at an important crossroads in the Pre-Raphaelite movement which Alison Smith has concisely described:

The style known as Pre-Raphaelitism gradually became more diffuse [after the mid-1850s] as many

⁵³ This influence was the subject of an exhibition, *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites*, held at the National Gallery, London, from October 2017 to April 2018, with accompanying catalogue by Alison Smith et al., *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: National Gallery, 2017).

painters began to reject the credo of truth to nature and returned to working from memory and *aides-mémoire* in the studio. The second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism soon came to be seen as the antithesis of the first, as artists turned away from social and moral themes in favour of figurative subjects that impinged more directly upon the senses[.]⁵⁴

It is therefore possible to situate Stephens at crucial points in the development and diffusion of Pre-Raphaelitism, which would eventually merge into the Aesthetic Movement, and to see his writings negotiating and adapting to these changes.

In Chapter 8, this thesis moves forward chronologically into the 1860s. Stephens has rarely been considered as an expounder of the principles of the Aesthetic Movement of the same calibre as Swinburne and Walter Pater.⁵⁵ Aesthetic artists and critics in the 1870s and 1880s were interested in the close relationship between art and music, and how a painting could communicate like a musical composition through careful arrangements of colour and tone. Stephens wrote enthusiastically about the relationship between colour and music in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine* in as early as 1860, with further discussions of the subject appearing in his reviews of the RA in the *Athenaeum* prior to 1870. These articles have never been reprinted and Stephens's participation in an innovative aesthetic conversation which would assume greater prominence in the 1870s and 1880s has gone unnoticed until now.

Central to Stephens's criticism is the idea of ekphrasis, which Stephen Cheeke defines as 'the evocation of the painting or sculpture by the written word'.⁵⁶ Cheeke highlights the art critic's role 'as a mediator between the gallery visitor and the museum "aura" of famous artworks'.⁵⁷ One can take this further to describe the nineteenth-century art critic as a mediator between the artwork and the reader, using a block of text to convey the composition, colour palette and overall 'mood' of a picture that the reader was often unable to see for themselves. Elizabeth Helsinger has described written criticism as 'a form of translation, with its own challenges of preserving the

⁵⁴ Joyce H. Townsend, Jacqueline Ridge and Stephen Hackney, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques: 1848–56* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 19.

⁵⁵ A notable exception is Barbara Bryant's essay '1864: New Art Ascendant', in *The Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition: A Chronicle, 1769–2018*, eds. Mark Hallett, Sarah Victoria Turner and Jessica Feather (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2018), which mentions FGS as a writer 'sympathetic to the emerging avant-garde' along with WMR in the 1860s.

⁵⁶ Stephen Cheeke, *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2008), 168.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

strangeness [...] [of a] painting's line and colour'.⁵⁸ There is no doubt that W. M. Rossetti's empirical approach to Pre-Raphaelitism has been invaluable for historians of the movement. But from Stephens's essays and articles we gain a deeper understanding of how the Pre-Raphaelites perceived one another's work and expressed it, publicly, through the written word. Although, as has already been mentioned, Stephens wrote about many Victorian artists, it is when writing about Pre-Raphaelitism that he is most insightful and his prose most emotive and sensual. His best writing is at once literary and painterly: the former because of its high register, long sentences and complex, sometimes arcane vocabulary, evoking a kind of breathless reverence; the latter because of its evocation of colour, lighting, iconography and composition, also conscious of an artwork's material qualities.

Stephens's writing of the 1850s is in some ways analogous to Pre-Raphaelite painting, packed with dense visual detail and often communicating a moral message. It is possible to see him falling somewhere between the lyrical descriptive powers of John Ruskin in the 1840s and the Aestheticist writings of Swinburne and Pater in the late 1860s and 1870s. While there is no record that Stephens ever met Ruskin or Pater, there can be no doubt that he was conscious of their writing. He was more intimately acquainted with Pre-Raphaelite principles than Ruskin, and expounded proto-Aesthetic theories a full decade before Pater, as Chapter 8 will demonstrate.⁵⁹ Stephens himself reported that Quilter mistakenly attributed some of his writings to Pater on one occasion.⁶⁰ His work can therefore be placed within the wider context of radical art criticism in the 1860s, together with its celebration of the art of his fellow Pre-Raphaelites who all acknowledged his importance in furthering their cause.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Helsinger, *Poetry and the Pre-Raphaelite Arts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), x.

⁵⁹ FGS to John Durand, 27 May 1856, JDP.

⁶⁰ Harry Quilter, *Preferences in Art, Life, and Literature* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1892), 60–79. FGS to WMR, 24 July 1882, ADC, Box 14, Folder 8: 'I have written so much that seemed not unwelcome to [DGR] that one would rather like to have it reissued in a coherent form: – especially as your antagonist Mr Quilter innocently attributed my work to Mr Pater'. FGS eventually published his monograph on DGR in 1894.

Chapter One: Biography

The private lives of the Pre-Raphaelites have always been the source of intense scrutiny. The personal affairs of Millais, Hunt and D. G. Rossetti and their ‘models’ and ‘muses’ – Effie Gray, Annie Miller, Elizabeth Siddall and Jane Morris, to name a few – have been examined in biographies, films and television series. Such accounts seek to reveal the human narratives behind the art and hope to find biographical resonances within Pre-Raphaelite artworks.¹ While this thesis will not generally favour such personalised readings of Stephens’s art or his writings, it is important to recognise that he has never been the subject of a standalone biography and the few existing accounts are riddled with inaccuracies. The current definitive source, the entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* written by Dianne Sachko Macleod, repeats inaccurate information from earlier sources. The *Benezit Dictionary of Artists* even states that Stephens was born in Aberdeen.² It is only fair, then, to give Stephens and his family their share of attention. This chapter presents a new account, aided by previously unpublished primary material which I have uncovered. I am indebted to Philip Shaw’s existing research into the Stephens family tree for this study.³ Much of the biographical data presented here was found using the genealogical website Ancestry, which gives access to birth, marriage, death and census records.

Family, Early Years and Education

It has been incorrectly stated that Stephens’s father, Septimus Stephens, came from Aberdeen, the son of Octavius Stephens of Dublin.⁴ Septimus was actually born in Prestwich in Greater

¹ For example, the idea that DGR’s *Beata Beatrix* (ca. 1864–70; Tate) was created as a memorial to Siddall, or that it is possible to detect personal tensions in JEM’s portrait of Ruskin, painted while the artist was falling in love with Ruskin’s wife in 1854–5.

² ‘Stephens, Frederick George’, *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, online edition, <https://doi.org/10.1093/benz/9780199773787.article.B00175561>.

³ Philip Shaw, ‘Stephens Family Tree’, Colonel Stephens Society, <http://colonelstephenssociety.co.uk/miscellaneous%20topics/family%20tree.html> (accessed 12 April 2018).

⁴ Manson 1920; this error is repeated in the *ODNB* entry for FGS by Macleod.

Manchester in 1786, the son of a John and Mary Stephens.⁵ Nothing is known of Septimus's childhood, but as a young man he first encountered the financial difficulties which would trouble him for the rest of his life. In 1807, aged 21, he was charged with embezzling funds (£800) from the company in Manchester for which he worked as a superintendent. The court report described Septimus as a bookkeeper and salesman and 'a man of great integrity, honesty, sobriety and honour', explaining that 'because the prisoner was expecting a salary increase he borrowed money against it in order to help out relatives in poor circumstances, [...] he supports his widowed mother and her children'. He was convicted at the New Bailey Courthouse in Manchester on 25 July and given an initial sentence of two years in prison.⁶ He would have been imprisoned in the County Gaol of Lancashire located in Lancaster Castle. It is clear that the Stephens family was not well off and Septimus struggled to keep his mother and siblings from destitution.

When exactly Septimus moved down to London is not known, but assuming he was released from prison in 1809, it was probably sometime after 1810, so that he could start a new life. This move did not necessarily solve his problems. Early in 1818, he was declared bankrupt, described in the *London Gazette* as a warehouseman lately living in Dowgate Hill in the City of London.⁷ The following year he was discharged from Fleet Prison, where he had been imprisoned after failing to pay his debts.⁸ Septimus's personal life looked more hopeful when, on 3 June 1820, he married Ann Cooke (or Cook) at St Pancras Old Church. The couple's marriage bond dated 31 May states that Ann was a spinster 'of the parish of St Peter ad Vincula within the Tower of London'; besides this, very little is known about her. She was possibly born in 1788, the daughter of a William and Mary Cooke.⁹ Some accounts state that Septimus was an official at the Tower of London, but according to Frederic his father's 'sole connection with the Tower was that,

⁵ Septimus was baptised on 25 June 1876 at St Mary the Virgin, Prestwich, Greater Manchester. He had a younger brother, Ralph, baptised on 27 February 1791 at the same church.

⁶ Report of William Robert Hay (Chairman of the Lancashire Quarter Sessions at Salford), 20 October 1870, National Archives, HO 47/39/47, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9670576>.

⁷ *London Gazette* (3 February 1818), 252–53.

⁸ An entry in the King's Bench and Fleet Prison Discharge Books and Prisoner Lists.

⁹ Ann Cooke was baptised on 12 November 1788 at St Botolph without Aldgate, the same church where FGS would be christened in 1834.

long before I was born [in 1827], he rented and lived in one of the official residences there'.¹⁰

This is likely how Septimus and Ann met.

The couple's first child, Mary Ann, was born in 1823. A second daughter, Eliza, followed in 1824; when she was baptised, Septimus was recorded as a tavern keeper living in St Michael's Alley in Cornhill in the City of London.¹¹ Their first son, Frederick George Stephens, was born on 10 October 1827 in Cornhill. Although he was baptised Frederick, as a young man he dropped the 'k' from the end of his name and was known thereafter as Frederic. For reasons unknown, he later told people that he was born in Walworth in south London, rather than Cornhill; his obituary in the *Westminster Gazette* gives Walworth as his birthplace, as do the 1871, 1881 and 1891 censuses (yet the 1851 census, when he was still living with his family, states that he was born in Cornhill). His younger brother, Henry George Stephens, was born in 1829, also at Cornhill.¹²

There has been some confusion surrounding Stephens's date of birth. When he was baptised on 30 December 1831 at St Botolph without Aldgate in the City of London, his birthdate was given as 10 October 1827 (Fig. 9).¹³ This is confirmed by J. B. Manson's portfolio monograph on Stephens in 1920, the notes for which were provided by Stephens's son Holman. Stephens himself told W. M. Rossetti that he was 'born on Oct. 10 1827'.¹⁴ However, the baptism record for Frederic's third sister Helen, on 2 December 1827, states that she was born on 14 August that year, apparently only two months before her brother, which improbably suggests that Ann Stephens gave birth twice in two months. Since Helen was baptised much closer to her birth, and Frederic some four years after his, it is possible his parents were misremembering, and he was actually born in 1828. This year is given in other near-contemporary biographical sources on Stephens, including his obituary in the *Westminster Gazette* and the 1912 *Dictionary of National*

¹⁰ FGS to WMR, 22 February 1907, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10. FGS was responding to WMR's *Some Reminiscences*, 1:67, which states that Septimus 'had been [...] an official of some kind in the Tower of London'. This is repeated in Taylor, 'Stephens', 173.

¹¹ The baptism took place on 28 November 1824 at St Michael Cornhill, St Michael's Alley, City of London.

¹² Shaw, 'Holman Stephens' Family Tree'.

¹³ London Metropolitan Archives, St Botolph, Aldgate, Register of Baptism, P69/BOT2/A/01/MS9231, Item 4.

¹⁴ FGS to WMR, 16 December 1895, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

Biography – information which, once again, would have been provided either by Holman Stephens or Frederic’s widow Clara.¹⁵ However, as Stephens himself stated that he was born in 1827, corroborated with his baptism record, we can assume this is the correct year.¹⁶

Tragedy struck the Stephens family when Ann died in or around 1830.¹⁷ In January 1834 Septimus was described in the *London Gazette* as ‘late of the Cock and Lion, Saint Michael’s Alley, Cornhill, [...] Tavern-Keeper, and Steward of a Margate Steam Packet, called the Hero, an Insolvent Debtor, who was discharged from the Fleet Prison’.¹⁸ He found newfound stability later that year when he married Dorothy Mary Farmer, who became Frederic’s stepmother (he would always refer to her in his correspondence as ‘Mother’).¹⁹ From 1836–9 Septimus and Dorothy were master and matron of the Cleveland Street Workhouse (also known as the Strand Union Workhouse) in Marylebone, although no new information about this has come to light. The extent to which the young Frederic was aware of his parents’ involvement with a workhouse notorious for its poor living conditions can only be surmised. Charles Dickens, who lived at what is now 22 Cleveland Street as a child and then again as a teenager in the 1820s, is thought to have been inspired by the workhouse when writing *Oliver Twist*, which was serialised in 1837–9 while Septimus and Dorothy worked there. In 1837 they had a son, Charles Burrell Stephens, meaning that Frederic gained a half-brother.²⁰ However, Septimus wavered in and out of bankruptcy and debtor’s prison and changed jobs often, to the point where it becomes difficult to keep track of his movements. When he was imprisoned for debt in Surrey County Gaol in 1841, the *London*

¹⁵ 10 October 1828 is given in the *Westminster Gazette* (12 March 1907), and Robert Steele, ‘Stephens, Frederic George’, *Dictionary of National Biography. Second Supplement*, 3 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1912), 3:405–6.

¹⁶ At the time of the March 1851 census FGS was 23 years of age, suggesting a birth year of 1827.

¹⁷ I have been unable to trace the record of Ann’s death; by 1834 Septimus was listed as a widower (see note 71), and Henry Stephens was born in 1829, so 1830 is a probable date for her death.

¹⁸ *London Gazette* (21 January 1834), 141. The steam packet which operated between London and Margate was described in 1836: ‘The Hero has two engines of fifty-horse power, [...] The distance from London to Margate was eighty-four miles: generally made the passage in about seven hours and a half’; Charles F. Partington, *A Popular and Descriptive Account of the Steam Engine*, 3rd edn. (London: John Weale, 1836), 288.

¹⁹ Septimus and Dorothy were married on 23 October 1834 at St George’s, Bloomsbury; Septimus is listed as a widower and Dorothy as a spinster. Dorothy was probably baptised on 31 October 1791, St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey, the daughter of Nicholas and Ann Farmer.

²⁰ Charles, born 7 September 1837, was baptised on 13 February 1839 at St John the Evangelist, Paddington. The family address at this time was 6 Cleveland Street, Fitzrovia.

Gazette listed him as a carpet beater and cleaner and a former master of the Union Workhouse in Croydon.²¹ In spite of his troubles, he appears to have had a passing interest in art which he may have fostered in his son. He had portraits of himself painted by the watercolourist Elizabeth Heaphy (1841) and Benjamin Rawlinson Faulkner, and commissioned a portrait of the twelve-year-old Frederic in 1839 from an unknown artist.²²

Frederic began his education at University College School in Gower Street in 1836.²³ He rarely discussed his schooling in later life, save for his recollection that he had been ‘bored so horribly’ by having to learn mnemonical devices ‘which involved repetition of jargon, such as “Creatok, Deletock, Abraneb, Zafnia”, etc., hideous terms which had a now, thank God, occult connexion [sic] with the dates of the Creation, Deluge, Birth of Abraham’.²⁴ The school, recently established in 1830, was known for its progressive leanings. Founded on secular principles, it was one of the first schools to abolish corporal punishment and there was no religious teaching.²⁵ The boys were also encouraged to use the scientific laboratories and equipment in the adjoining University College London buildings. Unfortunately, Stephens’s time at the school was cut short when, in 1837, aged nine or ten, he suffered an accident which left him with a lifelong limp.²⁶ A photograph of him taken as an adult (Fig. 10) shows an apparent deformity in his left leg, which appears slightly crooked. Indeed, there is evidence that he had to wear specially made shoes to try

²¹ *London Gazette* (29 June 1841), 1707: ‘Septimus Stephens, formerly of Cleveland-street, Fitzroy Square, Middlesex, Master of Cleveland-street Workhouse, then of No. 24, Russell-place, Fitzroy-square, Carpet Beater and Cleaner, and late of Croydon, Surrey, Master of the Union Workhouse, at Croydon aforesaid, [...] and during part of the time having also a private lodging at No. 12, Titchborne-street, Edgeware-road, Middlesex’. The census taken on 6 June 1841 shows that Septimus was imprisoned in Surrey County Gaol.

²² See Appendix 2, Nos. 29–31.

²³ University College School, *Alphabetical and Chronological Register for 1831–91 with Historical Introduction by Temple Orme* (London: n.d.), 257.

²⁴ FGS to WHH, 8 September 1870, WHHF.

²⁵ UCL Bloomsbury Project: University College School (UCS): https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/institutions/ucl_school.htm (accessed 12 March 2019). Notable former pupils of UCS include Frederic Leighton (in 1839–43), William de Morgan (1849–55), Hamo Thornycroft (1863–8), Walter Sickert and the grandson of Ford Madox Brown, Ford Madox Ford (1888–90); these last three could well have been taught by Stephens, who was the drawing master at UCS from 1862 until the 1890s.

²⁶ This incident was first mentioned in an addendum to WMR’s obituary for FGS in the *Athenaeum*, no. 4142 (16 March 1907): 329: ‘Latterly, he had been somewhat of a recluse, but he was visiting art galleries until the end, and never ceased to be active in spite of the lameness from which he suffered since an accident in 1837’.

and correct the problem.²⁷ The circumstances of the accident are not known as he never discussed it, but it must have been traumatic and it may well have contributed to his shy, reserved nature later in life. Duval has suggested that it ‘began a pattern of solitude and study, emphasised by his inability to join in the activities of other children’.²⁸ From that time he was educated at home by a private tutor, whose name is not known.

On 17 July 1843, aged fifteen, Stephens entered the Royal Academy Schools as a probationer, having been nominated by the portrait painter Sir William Charles Ross. In that year he also attended the drawing school at the British Museum, where he first made the acquaintance of Holman Hunt.²⁹ The two teenagers struck up an immediate friendship. As Basil Taylor has observed, Stephens and Hunt came from similar lower-middle-class backgrounds, Hunt later reflecting that they had grown up without the benefit of the ‘teaching of Rugby and Oxford’.³⁰ At one time, Stephens was also a student at the Anatomical School of Middlesex Hospital in Fitzrovia, and in 1844–5 he took a course of lectures and practical demonstrations on ‘descriptive and surgical anatomy’ conducted by the surgeon Richard Partridge at King’s College, London.³¹ This included dissections of cadavers, undoubtedly to assist his anatomical drawing. He successfully entered the RA Schools as a full-time student on 13 January 1844. A number of register sheets recording the attendance of students in the Antique School at the Academy show that Stephens applied himself fervently in his artistic studies. In 1844, from January to March and then August to December, he attended 132 classes; the following year, 89 classes.³² He was a dedicated student who felt that he had found his vocation in life, and he supplemented his artistic

²⁷ The name of his tutor has never been disclosed. In a letter to his stepmother, 5 September 1857, he asked her to ‘please to send to Hall for the shoes, if he has not already sent them, and let me have with all speed’.

²⁸ Duval, ‘Stephens’, 17.

²⁹ ‘He [Stephens] began life with me [Hunt] in 1843 as a student at the British Museum’; WHH to Henry Bruce, 1st Lord Aberdare, 24 November 1873, ADC, Box 14, Folder 11. WHH initially wrote ‘1844’ but corrected it to ‘43’. FGS and WHH are generally supposed to have met in 1844, when both were at the RA Schools; Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:113. The British Museum first opened its galleries of Greek and Roman sculptures for art students to draw in 1808.

³⁰ Quoted in Taylor, ‘Stephens’, 173.

³¹ Ticket in CSRM, 2015.47.19: ‘Admit F. G. Stephens, R.A. during one Course. Academical Year, 1844 1845’.

³² These registers were discovered by Mark Pomeroy, Archivist at the Royal Academy of Arts; they apparently had not been unrolled since the 1850s. I am grateful to Mr Pomeroy for showing them to me during my visit to the Royal Academy Library on 23 January 2018.

studies by deepening his knowledge of art history, particularly the early Italians.

In the summer of 1845, perhaps to earn extra income to support his family, Stephens went to stay in Oxford to undertake work on the railways. For exactly how long is uncertain, as only one of the surviving letters is dated (26 September 1845), and the exact nature of his work is unclear. When he was not working, he found time to pursue his passion for medieval history. ‘I am taking rubbings of some Brasses in New College (very fine), this is a glorious place’, he informed his stepmother Dorothy.³³ His enthusiasm for brass rubbing was encouraged by his friend Charles Bridger at this time. Bridger, an archaeologist and antiquarian, wrote to Stephens on 16 October 1845 about ‘rubbings of brasses [...] I have some that may be of service to you & I will send them to you very shortly, should they prove of use. Any rubbings you may happen to have which are useless, will be thankfully received [...] as well as any sketches of churches, church furniture or decorations’.³⁴ Stephens, then, was producing and collecting these graphic works for artistic inspiration. They would have provided a refreshingly medieval alternative to the Greco-Roman casts he was forced to copy at the Academy. Furthermore, they demonstrate his enthusiasm for the visual culture of the Middle Ages some three years before he was enlisted to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Already he was building up his visual knowledge of archaic or ‘primitive’ art that would later find expression in his historical surveys such as *Normandy: Its Gothic Architecture* (1865) and *Flemish Relics* (1866).

The earliest surviving likeness of Stephens is the small portrait begun in the winter of 1846 by Holman Hunt, when Frederic was 19 (Fig. 11).³⁵ The friendship between the two young men is codified in the surface of the panel itself – Hunt’s monogram is inscribed in red ink in the bottom-left corner, diagonally opposite Stephens’s own in the upper-right. The young sitter’s hair is swept back, and his upper lip bears the beginnings of a moustache – this would eventually grow into the full, dark beard which Stephens kept for the rest of his life. W. M. Rossetti recalled of the

³³ Twenty-three monumental brasses of various sizes can still be found set into the pavement of the north arm of the ante-chapel at New College.

³⁴ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 12–14.

³⁵ An undated early note from WHH, asking FGS ‘Can you come this evening about 6 to sit to me for an hour or two’, may relate to the portrait, which was completed in 1847; FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, f. 149.

Stephens family when he knew them in the 1850s: ‘Their means were evidently restricted, and Frederic [...] was unable to add to their resources’.³⁶ The 1851 census shows the family living at 59 Walcot Place in Lambeth: Septimus, a ‘Retired Manchester warehouseman’, aged 64; Dorothy, aged 58; Eliza, aged 25, and Frederic, ‘Artist’, aged 23. Stephens’s younger brother Henry married Jane Messenger in 1850, and his sister Mary Ann married Robert Warren, owner of Warren’s Blacking Factory, in 1854.³⁷ The factory, which had been co-founded by Robert’s father Jonathan in the 1790s, was connected with Dickens, who had worked there as a youth in the early 1820s and famously loathed the experience.³⁸

The Stephens family continued to encounter financial troubles. On 12 April 1853, the five remaining members of the PRB – Stephens, Millais, Hunt and the Rossetti brothers – met at Millais’s studio to draw each other’s portraits. Stephens later recalled what happened when he and Millais sat down to sketch one another:

Unhappily for me, I was so ill at that time that it was with the greatest difficulty I could drag myself to Gower Street; more than that, it was but the day before the entire ruin of my family, then long impending and long struggled against in vain, was consummated. I was utterly unable to continue the sketch I began.³⁹

Millais completed his sketch of Stephens and according to the sitter it ‘attests painfully enough the state of health and sore trouble in which I then was’. When the sketches were sent to Woolner in Australia, Stephens wrote an accompanying letter lamenting his inability to finish his drawing of Millais:

[I]n spite of all the tauntings [Millais] could pronounce, with proddings from Hunt, I viciously refused to proceed. [...] I was very ill or so sick at heart from some bad news I had just received that any noise was welcome, but actual thought seemed almost madness. I am giddy still at times.⁴⁰

The ‘entire ruin of my family’ was likely a financial crisis caused by Septimus, who was out of business and once again imprisoned in Surrey County Gaol because of debt in July 1853. Leonee

³⁶ Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, 1:68.

³⁷ Henry and Jane married on 22 December 1850 at Milton-next-Gravesend in Kent. Ann and Robert were married on 27 February 1854 at St-Mary-at-Lambeth; Septimus’s rank or profession is given as ‘Gentleman’; Robert was living in Pratt Street in Camden.

³⁸ For a history of the factory see <https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Warrens> (accessed 15 March 2019). Dickens supposedly translated his experience of the factory into *David Copperfield* (1849–50).

³⁹ Quoted in Millais, *Life and Letters*, 1:82.

⁴⁰ FGS to TW, 21 April 1853, quoted in Amy Woolner, ed., *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet, His Life in Letters* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1917), 58.

Ormond has already connected the ‘sense of unease’ in Stephens’s expression in Millais’s drawing – his shadowed brow, his nervous, direct eyes – with his personal situation.⁴¹ Millais drew Stephens deftly and accurately, with dark circles under his eyes, hollow cheeks and an off-kilter bow tie. These suggest an uncomfortable combination of ill health and mental strain; that the sitter recalled it so vividly forty years later indicates the impression it made upon him.

In December 1853, Septimus’s ‘great losses’ and ‘failing health’ threatened to plunge the family into a deeper financial crisis.⁴² Frederic returned home one evening to find his relatives in a state of distress after being hounded by a creditor; ‘I was up till 5 o’clock this morning and am quite exhausted with anxiety & fatigue’, he told Hunt afterwards.⁴³ Hunt came to the rescue with a cheque for £30, to help the family with their debts.⁴⁴ They were forced to move on 1 February 1854 from their home in Walcot Place to a small flat at 97 Lupus Street, Pimlico. As such, Frederic lost his studio and had to seek a new space in which to work. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, he attempted to support his family by taking on portrait commissions and making copies of sketches for Augustus Leopold Egg. Septimus Stephens eventually died on 23 February 1860 at 93 Lupus Street and was buried in Brompton Cemetery.⁴⁵

Marriage and Family Life

A portrait photograph of Stephens taken by Cundall, Downes and Co. in April 1859 (Fig. 10) shows a serious man whose dark hair and distinctive features can still be recognised from

Millais’s *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* for which he had modelled a decade earlier.⁴⁶ At this time he

⁴¹ Peter Funnell et al., *Millais: Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999), 45.

⁴² ‘It is with great regret that I have to inform you, that [...] it is totally out of my power to meet the Bill on the 23rd inst. – I had been in hopes to be able to take it up at least partially, but from my father’s great losses, with the circumstances of which you are acquainted, he is not able to assist me, and since we left [59] Walcot Place (Feb 1st) I have not had a study to paint in, – as my father’s failing health has impeded him in finding a suitable house, we have been shut up in apartments at this address’; FGS to WHH’s father William, 11 March 1854, 97 Lupus Street, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2. See note 44 for the ‘Bill’ in question.

⁴³ FGS to WHH, undated [‘December 1853’ added in pencil], WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁴⁴ Cheque from WHH to FGS dated 23 December 1853, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2: ‘Three months after date pay to my order the sum of Thirty Pounds for value received. W Holman Hunt’.

⁴⁵ The death certificate, signed by Eliza Stephens, describes Septimus as ‘Formerly a Manchester warehouseman’. The burial took place on 29 February.

⁴⁶ FGS to WMR, 9 April 1859, ADC, Box 14, Folder 7: ‘I want you to come to Cundall’s and be photographed with me as agreed. I wrote to Hunt to know if he will do so likewise on Saturday at 2 p.m. [...] You would[,] I doubt not[,] like to be with Hunt and I, better than any others of the old set as we three

likely had thoughts of ‘settling down’, particularly as his fellow PRBs were doing the same. Millais had been happily married to Euphemia Gray since 1855, and in 1860 became the father of a fourth child. After a long engagement, D. G. Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddall were wed in May 1860, with Siddall becoming pregnant the following year. It would appear that Stephens began courting his future wife, Rebecca Clara Dalton (Fig. 12) in the late 1850s, judging by a card which Clara later decorated and presented to Frederic ‘[i]n remembrance of a windy May morning in Cheny [sic] Walk 1859’ (Fig. 13). About 170 letters exchanged between them survive in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum, previously unknown to scholars; of those that are dated, the earliest is from 5 August 1859.

Clara was a student at the National Art Training School in South Kensington (formerly the Government School of Design).⁴⁷ She was also known by the surname from her first marriage, Rebecca Clara Charles. Although it is not known exactly how she and Stephens met, it was probably through artistic circles. Stephens told Hunt in February 1865: ‘I hear a good deal of Mrs Dalrymple from that indomitable little heroine Mrs Charles. Mrs D. seems to have taken a craze for the latter and been fierily urgent to get her to Little Holland House’.⁴⁸ Little Holland House in Kensington was the home of the Prinsep family and its resident painter George Frederic Watts, who at the age of 46 had married sixteen-year-old Ellen Terry in a disastrously short marriage. Stephens feared that Sophia Dalrymple, sister-in-law to Henry Thoby Prinsep, had designs to make Clara ‘a vehicle for the exculpation of poor, unlucky Watts, with regard to his woeful marriage’; as he did not ‘want her head turned’, he advised her against visiting.⁴⁹ This demonstrates that Clara was acquainted with a bohemian circle of artists and probably had aspirations to pursue an artistic career herself.

have best maintained the old relationship together. [...] I am going to be done singly besides and should like to go with some[one] who is up to the pose better than photographers ever are’.

⁴⁷ FGS to Whitworth Wallis, 16 April 1906, FGSP, MS. Don. c. 78, ff. 199–205: ‘Clara remembers being with me in the S. Kensington Museum (where she was then studying for the certificate) shortly after the [William Bell] Scott exhibition and there meeting Scott himself who came up to me and warmly thanked me for the review of his pictures which I had written [‘The Wallington Pictures’, *Athenaeum* no. 1758 (13 July 1861): 54–55]’.

⁴⁸ FGS to WHH, 19 February 1865, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Clara has been even more overlooked in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship than her husband, in part because of Frederic's secrecy about their marriage and the lack of clear information about her earlier life. Philip Shaw has shown that Clara was born in 1832 in Iver, Buckinghamshire.⁵⁰ Her parents were Riley and Sarah Dalton, who in 1861 were living at Eagle Cottage in the parish of St Mary the Boltons, West Brompton.⁵¹ The Daltons were working class: Riley was a building contractor, while Clara's brother Samuel was a carpenter and her other brother John was a 'carman'.⁵² There has been some confusion about Clara's status before she met Stephens. Jan Marsh has stated that Clara was a widow.⁵³ Another possibility suggested by Duval is that Clara was divorced, which seems more likely.⁵⁴ Either way, her previous husband was named William Charles Charles.⁵⁵ Clara and William had had a daughter, Clara Adelaide Charles, who was nicknamed 'Lottie' to avoid confusion. They also had a second child, Charles A. Charles, nicknamed 'Charlie'.⁵⁶ Lottie and Charlie would thus become Stephens's stepchildren, and he had no qualms about acknowledging them, as W. M. Rossetti noted in his diary in December 1866: 'Mrs S[tephens] has 2 children by her former marriage, but with money of their own, & not at present living with the Stephenses'.⁵⁷

Very little is known about Charlie, who was a sailor. Stephens mentioned to Hunt in 1871 that '[m]y step-son, a strapping fellow, is now on his second voyage as midshipman to Melbourne'.⁵⁸ Charlie was lost at sea in about 1873, as is evident from Stephens's

⁵⁰ Shaw, 'Stephens Family Tree'. Clara was baptised on 25 November 1832 in Iver, Bucks (her name was written as Rebecca Dalton).

⁵¹ The 1861 census entry also lists Riley and Sarah's three sons, Samuel (aged 23) John (19) and William (16), and their granddaughter – Clara's daughter – Clara Charles (aged 7). Numerous letters from Clara to FGS in 1861 are addressed from Eagle Cottage.

⁵² Recorded in the 1861 census.

⁵³ Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (London: Quartet, 1985), 229.

⁵⁴ Duval, 'Stephens', 124, note 9.

⁵⁵ Evident from the marriage record of Clara Adelaide Charles (RCS's daughter and FGS's stepdaughter) to Robert Palmer Jenkins at St Peter's Church, Hammersmith, on 18 October 1882; Clara gave her father's name as William Charles Charles. Present at the ceremony were WHH and Amy and Agnes Hughes (daughters of Arthur Hughes). See also n105.

⁵⁶ Philip Shaw, 'The Story of Lottie Jenkins', Colonel Stephens Society, <http://colonelstephenssociety.co.uk/miscellaneous%20topics/lottie%20jenkins.html> (accessed 12 April 2018).

⁵⁷ Unpublished diary of WMR, 20 December 1866.

⁵⁸ FGS to WHH, 24 February 1871, WHHF, Folder 1-4.

correspondence.⁵⁹ Lottie, however, went to live with her mother and stepfather for many years. She addressed the latter rather formally as ‘Mr Stephens’ in her letters.⁶⁰ When she was finally baptised in 1871, she stated that her date of birth was 2 March 1856 and that her father’s name was William Charles Charles.⁶¹

An intriguing aspect of Frederic and Clara’s early relationship is the former’s dogged determination to improve the latter’s spelling, grammar and handwriting. The extant letters show him persistently chastising Clara for her writing, also sending her composition exercises which she would complete and return to him. Despite her valiant efforts, Stephens wrote to her in June 1861:

[Y]our patience to write with elegance and care has failed you and the result is not so good by any means as where you began. [...] I [have] begun to think it might be profitable to send you a third dictionary as two are evidently not enough to teach you how to spell correctly the words you write [...] I can tell you it is most painful to me to tell you all this as I know it must be to you, but, I am deeply hurt that you will not take pains enough to insure me from having to repeat the childish lesson over and over again, when I have written these very words for you, while you were at Egham, a score of times each. It is nothing but the most utter carelessness leads to this for you have the books to go rightly by, you have been told and entreated fifty times about them.⁶²

Stephens’s fixation with ‘improving’ Clara’s writing habits (expressed in dozens of other letters) seems pedantic and controlling, although he did develop a rather obsessive personality as an adult. Still, he could be affectionate, referring to her as his ‘love’, ‘dearest Pet’ and ‘darling’, and writing often to arrange their next meetings.⁶³ Clara did not seem put off by his lecturing tone and strove to learn from his examples, although she did confess that he could ‘never understand how

⁵⁹ FGS to WHH, 12 April 1879, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 4: ‘I had no opportunity to warn you the other evening when at your house not to refer to losses of ships at sea before my wife; I see your wife and you do not know that my stepson, a bigger fellow than either of us, was lost a few years since at sea in the most distressing manner, and that his mother, especially at this time of the year, renews this misery most poignantly’. FGS wrote to WMR on 31 October 1898 about ‘my dear step-son Charlie who, five and twenty years ago, was lost at sea with all the crew of his ship, nothing coming ashore but the body of the chief engineer with a bundle of ship’s papers in his pocket’ (ADC, Box 14, Folder 9). This means Charlie died in 1873, probably in April judging by the first letter’s reference to ‘this time of the year’.

⁶⁰ FGSP, MS. Don. c. 78, ff. 7–8 (24 September 1868, signed ‘C. A. Charles’), ff. 9–10 (10 October 1869, signed ‘Lotie [sic] Charles’).

⁶¹ The baptism took place in Chiswick (name of church not yet known) on 24 June 1871.

⁶² FGS to RCS, 26 June 1861, CSRM, 2015.47.91.99. He was responding to a letter from RCS, 23 June 1861, CSRM, 2015.47.91.96, in which she described ‘a dreadfull fire at Cotton’s Warf’.

⁶³ In one letter, undated (possibly June 1860), FGS writes: ‘I need not say that I must not leave town even for a moment till it is decided one way or another, so, I shall not lie in my loving wife’s arms to-night as I longed to do’.

painful it is to me who has tried and yet failed so many times'.⁶⁴ She openly expressed her passion for Stephens, writing in July 1861: 'Dear darling you have made me a happy woman you have left me with thoughts that would make a woman proud if she did not love you, how much more so for me who loves you more than you can ever think, or darling when I am with you it is to me more love to look at you in silence than for words'.⁶⁵ She also felt an intense physical desire, writing to him in September 1863 that she had experienced 'a very delightful dream of you[,] oh so sweet were the caresses[,] I thought you were with me as last time and that your caresses were more burning than ever[,] I thought to[o] if ever love & lust combined it was with us'. She continued breathlessly to describe her fantasy that Stephens was a priest, and that she tempted him into breaking his vow of celibacy and becoming her lover.⁶⁶

Frederic and Clara's relationship excited the curiosity of their friends, as is clear from letters exchanged between Stephens and Hunt after the latter became engaged to Fanny Waugh in 1865. The friends' dialogue reveals Stephens's secretive character and their opinions on society in general. Hunt dutifully informed his friend:

People have the astounding effrontery to say you are married, if it is not so tell me and I will contradict it, on the other hand if it is so it must at any penalty be made public, in thinking over the possibility of the rumour being true I certainly see there are conditions of your position which would act as obstacles to a public marriage: amongst others the expense of keeping a home for your wife sufficiently dignified for her to receive guests would be a difficulty in your eyes. [...] if you are really a husband choose between two things – either retrace your steps – of course I mean only in appearance[,] profess to be no further advanced than I am and fix a time for your second marriage and then with one or two friends go thro' the ceremony to the satisfaction of everybody, otherwise state to some of your old friend[s] the fact of your marriage, the date of it and all the circumstances which concern the world, and leave us to overrule all objections.⁶⁷

In the same letter Hunt, with affectionate open-mindedness, and happy to see his friend had found a partner, offered his congratulations to Clara regardless of whether she was 'Mrs Charles or Mrs Stephens'. Stephens responded to the unwanted curiosity about his private affairs:

The effrontery of those persons, unknown to me, who [...] desire to be enlightened about my domestic arrangements, is indeed 'astounding'. [...] I am so deeply impressed by these feelings as to regret, for

⁶⁴ RCS to FGS, 26 July 1861, CSRM, 2015.47.91.121. It is possible that RCS was dyslexic, although the condition was not identified until the 1880s

⁶⁵ RCS to FGS, undated ('July 12th '61' added by FGS), CSRM, 2015.47.91.102.

⁶⁶ RCS to FGS, undated ('Sept 27' added in ink by FGS, '1863' in pencil by unknown hand, CSRM, 2015.47.91.154, which continues: 'I was glad to awake and find that you were no preast [sic] and that ther[e] was no thing to prevent us to love as we liked and that happiness depended on ourselves and that I had only to will it and we were as free as the air we breath[e]'.
⁶⁷ WHH to FGS, 18 August 1865, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 127–28.

the sake of the inquirers, that I have no mystery to unveil, unless indeed such as may be made by others than myself. This is my answer to the inquisitive British public, and, in order that you may, in the first instance – should the human mind continue anxious on the subject, – be able to state as much and not more, I will leave you in the dark [...] When we meet I will tell you all there is to tell but I shall tell it to you, and to you only, making no exceptions. As you have been so much annoyed by the discussion of your own affairs [Hunt's involvement with Annie Miller] among strangers you will guess why I am thus reticent and determined not to gratify impertinent persons. As 'society' and I have been strangers to each other for six or seven years I may leave you to guess how much surprised I am at this sudden display of interest in my affairs. For the sake of the lady [Clara] I should like to learn from you who are the persons thus concerned for her.⁶⁸

For all his protests against the 'inquirers', Stephens evidently liked to characterise himself as an individual estranged from 'society', a word he sarcastically placed in quotation marks to suggest the vapidness of the cosmopolitan social scene. In his next letter, Hunt revealed that it was actually Millais and Robert Braithwaite Martineau (a close friend of the PRB) who 'had merely had their curiosity excited by meeting you, or hearing of your being, frequently in public with the lady alone'.⁶⁹ Although Stephens then insisted that he was 'utterly unconscious of having offended against the conventions of society', his critique of his stepmother Dorothy's family with their 'tight jackets of parlour virtue' indicates an awareness of, and a dislike for, such rules – and perhaps a slight pleasure at having flouted them.⁷⁰ Ultimately, he wished only for a respectful privacy in which to court Clara. By November 1865 the couple had unofficially solemnized their relationship, as Stephens referred to his 'wife' in a letter to Hunt.⁷¹ On 24 December 1865, the couple declared their intention to marry, with the marriage taking place at Allhallows Barking in the City of London on 8 January 1866 (Fig. 14).

Having been irked by his friends' inquisitiveness about his personal affairs, Stephens kept many of them in the dark about his marriage for several months and only chose to announce it to them in December that year. Even W. M. Rossetti did not hear of the marriage properly until November.⁷² He wrote to Stephens: 'Your pleasant news is only half news to me, for an

⁶⁸ FGS to WHH, 25 August 1865, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 3.

⁶⁹ WHH to FGS, 4 September 1865, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 129–30.

⁷⁰ FGS to WHH, 26 September 1865, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 3.

⁷¹ FGS to WHH, 11 November 1865, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 3: 'I am glad the lady [Fanny Waugh] does not mutilate her ears with holes for earrings, I do not permit my wife to do so although, of course, like all women, she longs to do that which she ought not'.

⁷² Unpublished diary of WMR, 22 November 1866: 'Replied to Stephens's announcement, rec'd yesterday, of his marriage' (on microfilm in the Bodleian Library, Reel 1).

expression in one of your recent letters had pretty ready persuaded me of the fact'.⁷³ The art historian Mary Margaret Heaton (née Keymer), Stephens's acquaintance of ten years or more, wrote to him on 3 December offering her congratulations, but also chastising him for only telling her the news when it was 'of very old date'.⁷⁴ On the same day, Maria Hungerford Pollen wrote exclaiming 'Your wife! why how is it I did not know it & send my congrat[ulatio]ns earlier & how could you keep from me so great & happy a fact?'⁷⁵ Hunt was apparently the only PRB who had been privy to Stephens's situation from the outset; given the years of time and labour which Stephens had put into assisting Hunt with Annie Miller, it was only fair that Hunt should support his friend in return.

Stephens was also waiting until he and Clara had found more respectable lodgings where they could receive visitors. The marriage certificate states that they were living together at 9 Tower Dock. Nine months later, on 29 September 1866, they took up a lease on 10 Hammersmith Terrace in Hammersmith, their home for the next 39 years.⁷⁶ W. M. Rossetti, visiting the couple on 5 December, described it as 'an agreeable redish [sic] house, the back looking out direct on the river'.⁷⁷ The Stephenses were the first of several Victorian artistic and literary figures to live in Hammersmith Terrace: the typographer Emery Walker moved into No. 7 in the late 1870s, while No. 8 was occupied first by May Morris and George Bernard Shaw (as a lodger) in the 1890s, and then by the artist Mary Annie Sloane. A few minutes' walk east along the Thames was the Upper Mall, where William Morris lived at Kelmscott House from 1878 until his death in 1896.

Clara gave birth to a son at 10 Hammersmith Terrace on 31 October 1868. Stephens enjoyed thinking up a name for his new-born child: on one occasion he joked that he would take up Hunt's advice for 'euphony' in a name and christen the baby 'Holman Heliogabalus Stephens,

⁷³ WMR to FGS, 22 November 1860, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, f. 95.

⁷⁴ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 59, ff. 30–32. Heaton had been friends with FGS since at least 1856; her father James Keymer was a silk printer. In 1870 she published *The History of the Life of Albrecht Dürer of Nürnberg*, the first English biography of Dürer.

⁷⁵ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 85, f. 154. There is also a letter from John Pollard Seddon, 9 December 1866, MS. Don. e. 86, ff. 132–33, congratulating FGS on 'the announcement of your marriage'.

⁷⁶ The original lease agreement, dated 26 October 1866, survives; FGSP, MS. Don. c. 78, f. 89. Their landlord was named Benjamin Lisle.

⁷⁷ Unpublished diary of WMR, 5 December 1866, microfilm in Bodleian Library.

and thus to express his double paternity and singular voracity'.⁷⁸ Eventually Frederic and Clara settled on 'Holman Fred., the former name we like on several accounts [...] The latter my wife wishes for on my account, also does my mother, I prefer it because it means Peace, which the boy has brought into this house'.⁷⁹ Holman was nicknamed 'Holly', and sometimes 'Golden Holly' owing to the colour of his long hair which grew past his shoulders (Fig. 15). In 1872, when Holman was four years old, Christina Rossetti wrote a short poem in his honour, posthumously titled 'Golden Holly' when it was published twenty years later:

Common holly bears a berry
To make Christmas robins merry:—
Golden Holly bears a rose,
Unfolding at October's close
To cheer an old Friend's eyes and nose.⁸⁰

According to W. M. Rossetti, Tennyson 'once saw the child in the Isle of Wight, and pronounced him (not unreasonably) to be "the most beautiful boy I have ever seen"'.⁸¹ By 1871 Frederic, Clara, Holman, Dorothy and Lottie were all living together at 10 Hammersmith Terrace.⁸² Dorothy died later that year, aged 80; she was buried alongside Septimus in Brompton Cemetery.⁸³

The Final Years

In 1880 Stephens wrote to Hunt apologising for his 'increasing moroseness and recluse habits. I very seldom go anywhere'.⁸⁴ When he and Clara did go anywhere, it was on walking holidays to far-flung counties such as Cornwall. A photograph taken during one of these Cornish holidays shows the couple at ease in the rugged environment (Fig. 16); another shows Stephens leaning casually against a stone wall (Fig. 17). Back home in Hammersmith, the couple had amassed a large collection of books, prints, watercolours, antique furniture and objets d'art (Fig. 18). 10

⁷⁸ FGS to WHH, 8 April 1869, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 4.

⁷⁹ FGS to WHH, 31 July 1869, WHHF, Folder 1-4.

⁸⁰ Christina Rossetti, 'Golden Holly', in *New Poems Hitherto Unpublished or Uncollected*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Macmillan and Co., 1896), 165.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁸² 1871 census. FGS's profession is given as 'Artist, Painter, & Author'; Lottie's, a 'Scholar'.

⁸³ Dorothy died on 24 November 1871, at 72 Hercules Buildings; the cause of death was asthma and 'senile decay'.

⁸⁴ FGS to WHH, 26 January 1880, WHHF.

Hammersmith Terrace became a place of pilgrimage for the younger generations of the 1890s who were interested in Pre-Raphaelitism, where they could commune with one of the last surviving members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and see curiosities from the bygone days of the 1850s.⁸⁵

The Stephensens' long tenancy of 10 Hammersmith Terrace came to an end in or before September 1905, when they moved next door to No. 9, which they also owned.⁸⁶ Stephens informed W. M. Rossetti that the move had been 'a terrible affair', but that Clara 'is better and gets about with one stick, which is better than two crutches, but she is a long way from being herself'. He reported that his own health was also 'better'.⁸⁷ He kept up his favourite physical activity since his youth – rowing on the Thames – but complained of a 'queer feeling' in his right arm and a worsening deafness.⁸⁸ Several recent events had put a strain upon his nerves. In 1902 he had been dismissed from University College School by the headmaster, John Lewis Paton, after some forty years of service as the drawing master.⁸⁹ Paton had brought in Frederick Brown, Slade Professor of Fine Art at University College London, to evaluate the drawing curriculum at the School; Brown was, in Stephens's words, 'a leading light of the Impressionist persuasion, quite ignorant of what a boys' day school requires', and it was evidently felt that Stephens's teaching methods were old fashioned.⁹⁰ The conflict between Brown's modernist views and Stephens's staunch Pre-Raphaelitism lay at the heart of the issue. One of Stephens's former pupils recalled that he and his classmates spent most of their time sketching from old plaster casts. The student also presented a detailed description of the aged drawing master who came to their art classroom every Wednesday afternoon:

[B]y and by his halting footsteps would be heard on the stairs, for the old gentleman [...] was crippled in one foot, so that the long flights of stone steps must have been a trying prelude to his weekly visits. He

⁸⁵ See Appendix 5.

⁸⁶ FGS to WMR, 24 September 1905, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10: 'We have removed from no. 10 (after 38 years) to no. 9 Ham. Terr.'.

⁸⁷ FGS to WMR, 18 December 1905, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10.

⁸⁸ FGS to WMR, 28 September 1904, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10. In the letter referenced in note 89, FGS states: 'My deafness varies vastly in keeping with my general health'.

⁸⁹ Paton (1863–1946) was Headmaster of UCS from 1898–1903.

⁹⁰ FGS to WMR, 1 October 1904, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10. Much of FGS's correspondence to WMR between 28 September and 18 October 1904 is taken up with complaints about Paton and Brown; he apparently went to the lengths of having his letter of dismissal from Paton printed and sent copies of it to the School's council.

was a rather scruffy-looking individual, with gleaming, alert eyes that shone behind his spectacles, a straggly, nondescript beard, and longer hair than we boys thought seemly. In fact, we regarded him rather as an outsider [...] [H]e dressed a little oddly, preferring to wear a brown, thick, tweedy-sort of jacket which had no labels at the collar and buttoned up rather high at the neck. But he commanded a certain amount of respect and I do not remember that we ever dared to ‘cheek’ him.⁹¹

This account of Stephens’s outlandish clothing and ‘scruffy’ appearance is supported by the surviving photographs of Stephens taken in the 1890s (Figs. 19–20). Jane Ellen Panton (née Frith) gave her own reminiscence in her 1908 autobiography:

Mr. Stephens was a man one always saw at all of the Private Views, and no doubt elsewhere [...] He wore his hair very long, and was usually attired in a wide ‘artistic’ hat and cloak, while his wife, in an old-fashioned bonnet and shawl, accompanied him and looked after him in a manner touching to behold. He was very lame and plain, and we, as young people, looked upon him as the old gentleman himself, and believed the lameness came from an ill-concealed cloven hoof.⁹²

This account by a younger writer pokes fun at Stephens’s outdated ‘artistic’ dress and even casts him as the Devil – the ‘old gentleman’ – with his lame leg like a ‘cloven hoof’. Despite his involvement in the creation of a radical art group decades earlier, the new generation at the end of the Victorian era were less likely to take him seriously.

Another incident which took its toll on Stephens’s health was his bitter dispute with Hunt, which erupted after the latter published his problematic memoir, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, in 1905, undermining his ‘quondam friend’ Stephens’s place within the original PRB. The two men had broken off communications in 1880 after a long disagreement, the details of which I have discussed elsewhere.⁹³ Stephens’s efforts to defend his reputation, which included publishing a pamphlet refuting Hunt’s claims which he sent to over 120 friends, must have caused considerable mental strain. W. M. Rossetti’s diary recorded the news and aftermath of Stephens’s eventual death on 9 March 1907:

I was much grieved to receive a telegram from Mrs Stephens saying that her husband died ‘quietly’ this morning – my good old PRB & affectionate friend. His death must I think have been rather sudden: on 22 Feb. he wrote me a long letter on a variety of subjects, without giving any hint of his being ill. It was well known however for years past that his life was precarious owing to heart-disease &c.

Rossetti and his daughter Helen called at 9 Hammersmith Terrace the following day, where they

⁹¹ Anonymous, ‘One of the Pre-Raphaelites: When F. G. Stephens Taught Drawing at University College School’, *Times* (26 February 1959): 12.

⁹² Jane Ellen Panton, *Leaves from a Life* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1908), 171–72.

⁹³ Robert Wilkes, “‘My quondam friend of nearly half our lives’: Hunt’s relationship with F. G. Stephens”, *Pre-Raphaelite Society Review* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 2018): 30–46.

met Clara and Holman:

[Clara] is much calmer than I had been fearing: entered freely into the details of her loss. S[tephens] was in the habit of sitting up quite late. On the evening of F[riday 8th] Mrs S. went to bed. About 4 a.m. on Sat[urday 9th], finding that S[tephens] had not come to bed, she returned to the sitting-room, & found him in a seemingly natural attitude, bending over a book on his writing-table. Trying to arouse him, she found he was dead – had probably expired a couple of hours previously. A Dr. was fetched, but nothing could be done. There had not been of late any aggravation of S[tephens]’s standing maladies: his death therefore was the easiest possible – just a cessation of the action of the heart. He was aged 79 last 10 October. We accompanied Mrs S. into the room where his body is lying: he looks very calm, & (as he always was) markedly handsome: hair still abundant & fairly dark, & a general aspect that one would not associate with the age of nearly 80. I assented to the request that I should attend the funeral in Brompton Cemetery on the 14th: understand that Hughes, Wallis & Daniel [...] will be there. The son asked me also to write a sort of obituary notice, for the Athenaeum or Times: this I am most willing to do [...] The house, 9 Hammersmith Terrace, into which S. & his wife removed about 1 1/2 [years] ago, has been nicely attended to, & is amply stocked with works of art of one kind or another: this is the first time I have been in it.⁹⁴

The cause of death was officially given as ‘Old age’ and ‘Atheroma’. Rossetti attended the funeral at Brompton Cemetery on 14 March:

Reached the Cemetery towards 1.10, the interment being fixed for 1.30. The funeral-train arrived more like 1.20, & I, being not able to get out of the church, to which an official had directed me & where a different funeral-service was taking place, failed to join S[tephens]’s convoy until after the coffin had been lowered into the grave, & friends had dispersed. However, I had a little talk with Holman Stephens, who was cordial & pleased to see me. His mother [Clara] did not come. Day very sunny & fine, but with a trying cold wind. S[tephens]’s father, mother, & sister, are buried in the same spot.⁹⁵

Later that month the *Illustrated London News* reported that ‘among old friends like Sir L. Alma-Tadema, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Arthur Hughes, and Mr. W. M. Rossetti, at [Stephens’s] funeral were noticeable a number of younger men whom he had at times helped generously from the storehouse of his learning’.⁹⁶ Stephens’s estate was valued at £3,938 15s 7d, and he appointed Clara and Holman as executors of his will, leaving everything to them (his stepdaughter Lottie was not mentioned).⁹⁷

Clara remained living at 9 Hammersmith Terrace. Her husband’s death left her shaken and she retreated to Hastings and Bexhill-on-Sea to recover.⁹⁸ She died five years later on 25 November.⁹⁹ Stephens’s large collection of books and prints was auctioned at Foster’s in 1916.

⁹⁴ Diary of WMR, 10 March 1907.

⁹⁵ Diary of William Michael Rossetti, 14 March 1907. The ‘sister’ was probably Eliza Stephens.

⁹⁶ *Illustrated London News* (23 March 1907), 446.

⁹⁷ See also Shaw, ‘Lottie Jenkins’.

⁹⁸ Letters from HFS and RCS to WMR, 4 April and 6 September 1907, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10.

⁹⁹ The cause of death was given as ‘(1) Senile decay, (2) Chill on disordered stomach, syncope’; incidentally, the doctor who certified this was Leonard Bramah Diplock, the son of Thomas Bramah Diplock, a close friend of FGS and RCS.

She was survived by Holman Stephens, the only child, who never married or had children; as such, there are no direct descendants of the Stephenses alive today. After building a career as an engineer of light railways and attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel during the First World War, Holman died on 23 October 1931. In his will he left to the nation all or any pictures or drawings on loan at the Tate Gallery; four paintings and one drawing by his father, together with several other Pre-Raphaelite pictures from the family collection (see Appendix 2), were accepted as a bequest by the Tate in 1932.

Stephens's long life was enriched by his early connection with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. It is worth repeating his declaration to W. M. Rossetti in 1899, not long before his 72nd birthday: 'By the inner principles of P[re]-R[aphaelit]ism my life has been & is still guided'.¹⁰⁰ The following chapters of this thesis will investigate the effects of these inner principles on Stephens's artistic and literary production from the late 1840s through to the late 1860s. This must begin with his first involvement with the PRB itself in 1848, the subject of Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ FGS to WMR, 3 August 1899, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

Chapter Two: Stephens, the PRB and *Morte d'Arthur*

This chapter examines the developments in Stephens's creativity from 1848–9. The founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in August or September 1848 signalled a turning point in his artistic career, and also inspired his earliest literary compositions: he attempted his first proper oil painting, *Morte d'Arthur* (Fig. 1), and began writing poetry exploring Pre-Raphaelite subjects. Nowhere in his published works or private correspondence does Stephens mention the poems he wrote at this time. Fortunately, the surviving manuscripts which I have discovered provide a unique insight into his composition process; more generally, they confirm that all the PRBs wrote poetry of one form or another. The equal importance of the visual and literary arts in the Brotherhood's activities is typified in three consecutive days from August 1849 in the *PRB Journal*:

Thursday 16th. Gabriel made a study [...] for the head of the Angel in his picture [*The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*]. [...] [Woolner] has written 3 stanzas (in the rough) of his 'My Lady, in Life'.

Friday 17th. Gabriel began painting the head of the Angel; and he wrote 2 stanzas of a French song, 'La Sœur Morte'. We drew at Newman Street.

Saturday 18th. Gabriel, being at Woolner's wrote a *bout-rimés* sonnet called 'Idle Blessedness', and he began a song. He went on with the Angel's head. Woolner also wrote a sonnet, 'The Blue Spot'.¹

Here, the young men switch between composing, sketching and painting with ease. Poems and pictures are planned almost simultaneously, with one being set aside and the other taken up with startling fluidity. Different poetic styles are mixed together: sonnets and *bouts-rimés* (a literary game in which one person supplies a list of rhyming words for the other person to incorporate into a comprehensible poem), songs and lyrics. The same tendency applies to images, as the artists make preliminary studies for specific paintings (the head of the angel in D. G. Rossetti's *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*), while also practicing their general skills as draughtsmen at Leigh's School of Fine Art (later Heatherley) in Newman Street. Stephens was no different. Whilst studying at the RA and working on his first painting, he composed several poems and wrote two essays for the *Germ*, as well as a short story.

¹ *PRBJ*, 11.

Founding the Brotherhood and Stephens as an Art Teacher

As very little documentation dating from the time of the PRB's founding has survived, we must look to later accounts written by the men themselves in order to ascertain Stephens's involvement.

According to Hunt's 1905 autobiography, it was he who introduced 'F. G. Stephens, who had not yet achieved anything as an artist', to Millais and D. G. Rossetti in the late summer or early autumn of 1848.² Hunt's perspective is not wholly reliable – he was biased against Stephens in later years and was attempting to downplay his former friend's importance as a founding Pre-Raphaelite Brother. In fact, Stephens would already have been acquainted with the other artists through the RA Schools and his involvement with the Cyclographic Society earlier in 1848.³ Moreover, Stephens later described seeing Rossetti for the first time in the Antique School at the RA in 1846 – 'But', as he told W. M. Rossetti in a letter in 1895, 'I knew [D. G. Rossetti] a little before then'.⁴

Despite its inaccuracies, Hunt's account is true to some degree, as is confirmed in the same letter of 1895 by Stephens:

It was he [Hunt] who proposed to me to join the P-R.B., coming to my place the day after the society crystallised at Millais's in respect to the Campo Santo prints. A good deal of talk had gone between us before that time and leading up, but vaguely, to a contract, or agreement, such as the society held to – such as it was. Of this contract, and of the character of the Brotherhood, your account is exact and right.⁵

A few years later, William Michael's plans to publish a facsimile of the *Germ* prompted Stephens to reflect further on his role within the founding of the Brotherhood:

I shall be glad, if I come in at all about the foundation of the P-R.B., not to appear as if I had received the divine afflatus from Gabriel, Hunt or Millais. My joining it was simply the result of previously attained convictions which had long before been discussed between Holman Hunt and me. These convictions undoubtedly took form and force with the institution of the B[rotherhoo]d. but they were as much mine as anybody's.⁶

The second letter in particular rejects the idea that there was a hierarchical structure within the PRB:

D. G. Rossetti, Hunt and Millais at the top, with Stephens, Woolner, Collinson and W. M. Rossetti below them. Stephens felt that he risked being downgraded from an equal member of the Brotherhood

² *PR&PRB*, 1:128.

³ The Cyclographic was the short-lived 'immediate precursor' to the PRB to which, as Fredeman notes, 'all the Pre-Raphaelites with the exception of W. M. Rossetti belonged'; *PRBJ*, 108. FGS confirmed his membership to the Society – 'a sketching club with an ambitious name' – in the *Athenaeum* no. 3490 (15 September 1894): 359.

⁴ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 10–11; FGS to WMR, 5 December 1895, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

⁵ FGS to WMR, 5 December 1895, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9. FGS was referring to WMR's *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols. (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), 1:125–33, which gave an account of the PRB's establishment.

⁶ FGS to WMR, 3 August 1899, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

to one who fed off the influences of D. G. Rossetti, Hunt and Millais in a derivative fashion and who was brought in just to make up the numbers.⁷ W. M. Rossetti's account published in 1895 – which Stephens proclaimed was 'exact and right' – states that, while Millais, Hunt and D. G. Rossetti had the initial idea for establishing their group, they 'did not aim at confining it to themselves, supposing that other eligible men could be discovered and enlisted'.⁸ Consequently, the Brotherhood as a cohesive, organised body could not and did not exist until all seven of its members were in place.

Around this time, Hunt made an informal sketch of a 'PRB Meeting' (Fig. 21). His six Pre-Raphaelite Brothers are shown gathered around a sitting-room fireplace, engaged in communal reading and looking. Millais lounges in an armchair on the left, legs outstretched, holding up a book (presumably of poetry) so that he and D. G. Rossetti, who leans on the back of the chair, can see the words. On the right sits Collinson, hunched over a picture on his lap; Woolner kneels beside him, pointing out some detail, while W. M. Rossetti leans over in a pose that mirrors his brother. Stephens, standing near the fireplace, raises his fist as if in speech. The young men are tastefully dressed in waistcoats, tails and neckties; Dante Gabriel and Stephens have grown their hair to shoulder length, in the bohemian style. Each of their postures is distinctive and expressive – these are six individuals united by a collective youthful enthusiasm for art and poetry. To complete the circle, Hunt, the unseen seventh, has drawn them; reading, looking and creating are encapsulated in a single image.

As was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, there is a scholarly consensus that Stephens was not an enthusiastic or even a competent artist when he entered the PRB's orbit. This is probably because very little of his early work has survived in order to be judged, although he was certainly being proactive in pursuing his goals. By Hunt's account Stephens had made three notable designs in a medieval style by the autumn of 1848, one of which, *The Virgin and St Ann*, 'the most mediæval' of them, he was working up into 'a little picture' in Hunt's studio just prior to the Brotherhood's formation.⁹ (One of the other designs was probably *Dethe and the Riotours*, an illustration of Chaucer's 'The Pardoner's Tale' which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.)

⁷ FGS was perhaps mindful of Harry Quilter's scathing comments about him in Harry Quilter, *Preferences in Art, Life, and Literature* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1892), 63–64, describing him as 'rather a problem to his brother PRBs', a weak painter and a 'naturally dull and limited critic'.

⁸ Rossetti, *Family-Letters*, 1:131.

⁹ *PR&PRB*, 1:129.

This early painting has not survived, so it is not possible to make any close comparisons with D. G. Rossetti's own depiction of the Virgin with St Anne, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, which was being painted at around the same time. It seems to have been his only religious picture; all others which I have recorded depict secular subjects. The RA student registers reveal that Stephens attended 169 classes at the Antique School in 1848: 21 in January, 33 in February and 41 in March; followed by 3 in August, 1 in September, 15 in October, 28 in November and 27 in December.¹⁰

That Stephens was known and respected in the Brotherhood for his knowledge of artistic techniques, and the art of perspective in particular, has not properly been recognised. A letter from W. M. Rossetti in June 1849 indicates that Stephens had offered a critique of some cubes which Rossetti had drawn as an exercise in correct perspectival drawing.¹¹ The following month, the Rossetti brothers called on Stephens 'for perspective purposes'.¹² Dante Gabriel became his rather reluctant pupil, as Stephens later explained:

[W]anting to improve his knowledge of perspective, a subject of the Royal Academy curriculum to which he had never addressed himself, [Rossetti] came to me to be helped in that respect. That he was a particularly intelligent, but not very diligent learner is shown by the rough sketch of two medieval pages quarrelling [...] Assuming the airs of a teacher, I had complained that he neglected his work. His reply was this sketch, intended to show what I should incur by continuing to grumble.¹³

The sketch (Fig. 22), now in the collection of Glasgow Museums, is inscribed on the verso by Stephens: 'These sketches were made by D. G. Rossetti upon paper he used while I was teaching him perspective'.¹⁴ Rossetti probably drew the two quarrelling pages as caricatures of himself and Stephens. Both figures wear medieval costumes with pointed shoes similar to those in Millais's painting *Isabella*, recently exhibited at the RA in 1849, for which both men had modelled. Beneath their feet a series of parallel lines and a small square indicate a perspective lesson in progress but inevitably interrupted.¹⁵

¹⁰ Royal Academy of Arts Archive (see Chapter 1, note 32). JC attended 6 classes; WHH 23 (he had already been admitted to the Life School); DGR 4.

¹¹ 'Is it a fact that my cubes are erroneous in construction? I was not without vague misgivings at the time. Or are they merely slovenly in handling?' WMR to FGS, 30 June 1849, in Peattie, *Selected Letters*, 4.

¹² The same letter as in the previous note: '[W]e should be with you for perspective purposes on the then Friday week'.

¹³ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 29.

¹⁴ Surtees, *Rossetti*, 1:220. The 1916 inventory of 9 Hammersmith Terrace, page 44, lists the sheet as being in Stephens's possession.

¹⁵ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 29: 'The oblique lines athwart the feet of the figures are parts of the diagram'. FGS also notes there being 'a score of such [sketches] remaining on sheets of his exercises in the little science [of perspective]'; these appear to have also ended up in Glasgow.

Stephens's tutorship of Rossetti continued in November 1849, when he offered to 'draw in the perspective scale' of Rossetti's latest painting, *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (Fig. 23), and he visited Rossetti's studio on 16 December 'to do his perspective'.¹⁶ He also supplied a Latin inscription from one of his medieval brass rubbings for Rossetti to inscribe onto the picture frame, which the latter subsequently removed because of its "'Popish" sentiment'.¹⁷ Despite this documentary evidence, Stephens's contribution to Rossetti's painting has gone largely unnoticed by scholars, although Alastair Grieve has acknowledged the fact.¹⁸ W. M. Rossetti later declared that his brother 'never paid any attention' to matters of perspective, and that Stephens 'did something to arrange the perspective of [*Ecce Ancilla Domini!*]'.¹⁹ Elizabeth Prettejohn has noted that '[t]he awkward angle of the perspective recession [...] cannot quite be dismissed as technically inept'.²⁰ At the time, this was certainly recognised as unorthodox: when the picture was exhibited at the National Institution in 1850, the *Athenaeum* condemned its rejection of 'all the advanced principles of light and shade, colour, and composition', also lamenting its 'unintelligent imitation of the mere technicalities of old art'.²¹ Stephens was evidently familiar with these technicalities. Whether the sloping perspective of *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* was Stephens's or Rossetti's invention, or a collaborative merging of ideas between the two of them, is unclear; from William Michael's account, it would appear that Stephens was called in to 'arrange' what Dante Gabriel had in mind, owing to the latter's resistance to learning 'correct' perspective. Stephens would assume a more direct role as an art teacher in 1862, when he became the drawing master at University College School.

Painting Tennyson: *Morte d'Arthur*

By the end of 1848, nearly all the artistic members of the PRB had exhibited their work in public.

Stephens had been a student at the RA for some five years but was yet to exhibit anything, even if he

¹⁶ *PRBJ*, 26 (19 November 1849), 33 (16 December 1849).

¹⁷ Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 73; *CDGR*, 1:88, DGR to FGS, 21 August 1849: 'My people are beginning to wail and lament over the Popish inscription I propose copying from your brass'.

¹⁸ Alastair Grieve, *The Best Years of Rossetti's Art, 1846–1862* (Norwich: Real World, 2017), 116.

¹⁹ Rossetti, *Family-Letters*, 1:122.

²⁰ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Publishing, 2000), 51.

²¹ 'National Institution', *Athenaeum* no. 1173 (20 April 1850): 424. The review was probably written by Frank Stone.

had been working studiously in private. In 1849 he embarked on his first serious painting, eventually titled *Morte d'Arthur* (Fig. 1). He evidently began the work in January. A letter from Charles Rosenberg, a fellow student at the RA, on the 18th, indicates that Stephens borrowed a lay figure belonging to Rosenberg to use in his studio for three weeks or a month.²² Stephens ended up keeping the figure for much longer: on 11 June Rosenberg wrote to ask for it back, 'being in great want of it'.²³ It is fair to assume that the lay figure was intended for this picture: it would certainly have helped for the poses of Sir Bedivere and King Arthur, which would have been difficult for human models to hold comfortably for long periods of time. Duval has suggested that W. M. Rossetti modelled for the face of Arthur, and I would agree.²⁴ That the human figures are the most complete elements of the composition indicates that Stephens had worked solely in his studio, and unlike the other Pre-Raphaelites he was not yet confident enough to paint outdoors; the hills, cliffs and river outlined in the background do not seem sketched from a real, observed landscape. Stephens apparently voiced his frustrations with the painting to D. G. Rossetti, who encouraged him to persevere: 'I do not believe that King Arthur is gone to the Devil. Merlin would not permit of it. One of these days he will most certainly call up your spirits from the vasty deep, and you will find yourself on your Pegasus without knowing how'.²⁵

W. M. Rossetti recorded a PRB meeting (himself, D. G. Rossetti, Hunt and Collinson) at Stephens's house, 59 Walcot Place, on 26 July: 'Stephens wrote the other day to the Superintendent of the Liverpool exhibition, to know whether his picture (the King Arthur) would run a chance of being admitted'.²⁶ During the same gathering the PRBs also 'read over [Stephens's] poem of Arthur' – a subject which will be discussed later in this chapter. Stephens's letter to James Buchanan, the Secretary of the Exhibition of the Liverpool Academy, has survived:

Having lately completed a small picture which I am desirous of exhibiting [...] and being informed that it is necessary to have received an invitation from your Society before doing so, and that those invitations are

²² FGSP, MS Don. e. 58, ff. 144–45. 'Perhaps you will let me know when you intend to send for it', Rosenberg wrote, 'and I will see that it is ready'.

²³ FGSP, MS Don. e. 58, f. 146. Rosenberg wrote again on 25 July 1849: 'My dear Fred, you will greatly oblige me if you could let me have my Figure, as I am in great want of it' (f. 147).

²⁴ Duval, 'Stephens', 24.

²⁵ DGR to FGS, early June 1849, in *CDGR*, 1:86.

²⁶ *PRBJ*, 9 (26 July 1849).

accorded to previously selected artists, from the approval of their works in the various exhibitions, I beg to inquire I may not be eligible for that favour, although I have not as yet exhibited any work whatever.²⁷

That he lied about the state of his picture ('lately *completed*') was probably because he was writing to Buchanan out of cautious curiosity, believing that he had a slim chance of actually being accepted. (The Liverpool Academy ruled that only artists who had already exhibited could send their pictures for consideration.)²⁸ Stephens might also have been encouraging himself to finish the work, should Buchanan get back to him with a positive response. Buchanan's brief reply on 30 July did not entirely discourage Stephens but informed him that 'pictures will be received at the Rooms [at] Liverpool if forwarded at the artist's expense up to the 20th of August'.²⁹ The cost of sending the painting, together with the looming deadline, must have daunted Stephens and contributed to his abandonment of the work. At some point, when he still had ambitions to finish it, he inscribed his panel with the initials 'PRB' in the lower-left corner, together with his monogram. *Morte d'Arthur* is not mentioned again in the *PRB Journal* or in Stephens's correspondence, and despite the estimated date of 'ca. 1850–55' given by the Tate, he probably did not work on the painting after 1849.

Stephens was inspired by Tennyson's poem 'Morte d'Arthur', which had been published seven years earlier in 1842.³⁰ Tennyson was one of several contemporary poets included on the PRB's 'List of Immortals' drawn up in 1848, bearing one star beside his name.³¹ Critical praises of his first poetry collections in the 1830s were not as unanimous as might be expected. A lengthy, sarcastic review of *Poems* (1832) in the *Quarterly Review* in 1833, written by the Tory politician John Wilson Croker, scorned Tennyson as 'another and a brighter star of that galaxy or *milky way* of poetry of which the lamented Keats was the harbinger' – a jab not only at Keats's celebrated 'Bright star' sonnet but also at poets generally whose ideals were considered too lofty and affected.³² (Keats was

²⁷ FGS to James Buchanan, undated (23 July 1849), FGSP, MS Don. e. 58, f. 23. Buchanan is named as the Exhibition's Secretary in 1850 in R. W. Buss, ed., *The Almanack of the Fine Arts* (London: George Romney & Co., 1850), 124.

²⁸ Stephens's desire to exhibit at the Liverpool Academy's annual exhibition was shared by the other Pre-Raphaelites. Their connection with Liverpool, where their work was extensively exhibited, patronised and collected in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, has been examined by Christopher Newall, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Beauty and Rebellion* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016); and Mary Bennett, 'A Check List of Pre-Raphaelite Pictures Exhibited at Liverpool, 1849–67, and Some of Their Northern Collectors', *Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 728 (November 1963): 486–95.

²⁹ FGSP, MS Don. e. 58, f. 24. Buchanan states that FGS's letter (note 27) was dated 23 July.

³⁰ Alfred Tennyson, *Poems*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1842), 2:4–18.

³¹ For the full list see *PR&PRB*, 1:159.

³² *Quarterly Review* (April 1833), 81.

also one of the Brotherhood's Immortals, with two stars.) Comparisons were also made with Shelley and Wordsworth in an article titled 'The Faults of Recent Poets' in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1833, reviewing the same *Poems* volume. 'To resemble an old poet is not to be original', the critic wrote, adding that 'Keats and Shelley are abominable models'.³³ The comparison with Keats was an issue of class as much as poetics: in 1818, Croker had published a review of Keats's *Endymion* (again in the *Quarterly Review*) which famously and snobbishly called the young poet 'a disciple of the new school of [...] Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language'.³⁴

When Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' was first published it attracted disapproval as well as praise. John Sterling of the *Quarterly Review* was unimpressed by some of the verses: 'The "Morte d'Arthur" [...] seems to us less costly jewel-work, with fewer of the broad flashes of passionate imagery, than some others [in the volume], and not compensating for this inferiority by any stronger human interest'. Furthermore, the poem's mythic content was deemed irrelevant to contemporary readers: 'The miraculous legend of "Excalibur" does not come very near to us, and as reproduced by any modern writer must be a mere ingenious of fancy'.³⁵ As Edgar Finley Shannon has observed, this review, while not overly harsh, 'touched [Tennyson] on an exposed nerve' and 'convinced [him] that an Arthurian epic could have no hope of critical or even general approval'.³⁶ Some reviewers still associated the poet with the so-called 'Cockney School': the *Spectator* said of the 1842 *Poems* that an 'obvious defect' was Tennyson's 'diction; which, as in other writers of what is called the Cockney school, is piebald with the spots of various times'. It also accused him of choosing 'personal themes which are too trivial to excite interest', as well as 'plunging into dead ages' in order to 'impart attraction to classical themes'.³⁷ It was felt, then, that Tennyson's Arthurian poetic themes were not relevant to modern life, yet Stephens set out to depict this particular poem with a fresh immediacy.

³³ *New Monthly Magazine* (January 1833), 69–74. This review was probably written by Edward Bulwer-Lytton; Edgar Finley Shannon, *Tennyson and the Reviewers* (New York: Archon Books, 1967), 187, n65.

³⁴ *Quarterly Review* (April 1818), 204.

³⁵ *Quarterly Review* (September 1842), 401.

³⁶ Shannon, *Tennyson*, 91.

³⁷ *Spectator* (4 June 1842), 16.

As Deborah Mancoff has observed, Stephens was the first Pre-Raphaelite to depict an Arthurian subject from Tennyson's poetry.³⁸ I would take this further to add that he was the first Pre-Raphaelite to visualise any subject from Tennyson. His *Morte d'Arthur* predates Hunt's earliest drawing illustrating 'The Lady of Shalott' (1850) and Millais's painting *Mariana* of 1850–1 (based on the poem of the same title). Stephens was probably attracted to the combination of arcane subject matter and apparently 'uncouth' language in Tennyson's poetry, discussed above; he may have seen in 'Morte d'Arthur' the means for depicting legendary scenes in a plain, uncomplicated visual language. He applied a similar principal to the 'poem of Arthur' he wrote at this time, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Apart from a scarcity of other Tennyson subjects, there were few visual precedents Stephens could have drawn upon for his depiction of King Arthur's final moments. William Bell Scott's *King Arthur Carried to the Land of Enchantment* was exhibited at the RA in 1847, accompanied in the catalogue with an excerpt from Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the fifteenth-century collection of Arthurian tales from which Tennyson had derived his inspiration. However, Scott's picture is an altogether more romanticised production; in Christine Poulson's words, 'in its lack of emotional force, and in the delicate, idealised treatment of the figures, [...] the picture has much in common with the fairy subjects [...] that were popular from the 1840s onwards'.³⁹ It therefore owes little to Tennyson's poem, which offers a starkly realistic and less picturesque portrayal of its legendary source. Poulson also demonstrates that it was not until the early 1860s, after the publication of the first volume of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* in 1859, that images of King Arthur's death became more commonplace.⁴⁰ It would seem, therefore, that Stephens was one of the first Victorian artists to attempt a depiction of the death of King Arthur.

³⁸ Deborah N. Mancoff, *The Arthurian Revival in Victorian Art* (New York: Garland, 1990), 142–43.

³⁹ Christine Poulson, *The Quest for the Holy Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art, 1840–1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 16–17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 223, 229. James Archer's *La Mort d'Arthur* (1860), John Mulcaster Carrick's *Morte d'Arthur* (1862) and Joseph Noel Paton's *The Death Barge of King Arthur* (1862) are some examples; when Archer's picture was shown at the RA in 1861, the *Times* (13 May 1861): 6, commented on 'all the subjects from the *Mort d'Arthur* which the *Idylls of the King* have brought into pictorial fashion'.

Mancoff has already identified the specific lines from ‘Morte d’Arthur’ that Stephens illustrates.⁴¹ King Arthur, fatally wounded by Mordred during the Battle of Camlann, delivers a final order to Sir Bedivere, his last faithful knight:

‘My end draws nigh; ’tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin.’ (ll. 163–65)

Accordingly, Bedivere:

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O’er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro’ the place of tombs. (ll. 173–75)

I have found a sheet of paper written with extracts from Tennyson’s poem in Stephens’s hand which shows that he indeed had this passage in mind (Fig. 24).⁴² The weight of a full-grown man pressing onto the back of another is felt in Stephens’s picture, with Bedivere bracing himself with his left leg bent as Arthur sinks forward against him. Together they form an entangled pyramid frozen at a moment of tension; if Stephens had finished Bedivere’s face, it would be set with grim determination. Scratches on the blank lower half of Arthur’s face suggests that Stephens scrubbed out this area, struggling to articulate the natural movements of a mouth opening in speech, as Arthur, ‘muttering and murmuring’ in Bedivere’s ear, sighs, “‘Quick, quick! / I fear it is too late, and I shall die.’” (ll. 179–80) This section of the poem is marked by movement, as Bedivere, carrying Arthur, ‘swiftly strode from ridge to ridge, / [...] looking as he walk’d, / Larger than human on the frozen hills’ (ll. 181–3). A sense of urgency is intensified by the jarring sounds that reverberate around them: ‘dry clash’d his harness’, ‘the bare black cliffs clang’d round him’, ‘slippery crag that rang / Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels’. On the one hand these are the natural echoes of metal on stone, conveyed through the alliteration of ‘bare black’, ‘cliffs clang’d’ and ‘sharp-smitten’; however, they are amplified to an unnatural, foreboding pitch, disorientating the reader’s perspective. Stephens’s painting does not capture this prevailing dynamism and noise, instead conveying stillness and silence as Bedivere steels himself for his task.

⁴¹ Also cited in Catherine Phillips, “‘Charades from the Middle Ages’? Tennyson’s “Idylls of the King” and the Chivalric Code’, *Victorian Poetry* 40, no. 3 (Fall 2002), 245.

⁴² CSRM, 2015.47.96.8. FGS copied out ll. 23–24, 29–33, 52–58 and 170–75 from Tennyson’s “Morte d’Arthur.” On the reverse of this sheet he drafted a section of his “Arthur” poem.

Given that Tennyson's poem takes place on a winter's night, it would have been hard for Stephens to realistically paint snow-blanketed ground in the middle of an English summer. In this instance, the Pre-Raphaelite dedication to portraying only the observable facts of nature hindered the completion of a picture. The challenges of faithfully picturing a literary text were encountered by other PRBs. Hunt later recalled that his 1848 *The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro* (based on Keats's 1820 poem 'The Eve of St Agnes') was 'limited to architecture and night effect', but that he then wished to paint 'an out-of-door picture, [...] painting the whole out of doors, direct on the canvas itself, with every detail I can see, and with the sunlight brightness of the day itself'.⁴³ The picture he thus conceived was *Rienzi* (Fig. 25), begun in the summer of 1848 with plein-air elements painted on Hampstead Heath and incorporating a fig tree from the garden of Stephens's home at 59 Walcot Place in Lambeth.⁴⁴ Hunt deliberately painted outdoors first, 'while the summer lasted', before working on the figures in his studio. Stephens would have watched Hunt's progress and seen how the summertime conditions in which his friend worked directly resulted in the 'sunlight brightness' that pervades the finished canvas. This may have inspired him to attempt an outdoor subject the following year. The advantage for Hunt was that the action of *Rienzi* is located in Italy during the summer, meaning that the sunlit surroundings, even if painted from an English landscape, were appropriate for the subject.⁴⁵ By contrast, Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' emphasises a 'winter sea', a 'winter moon' and 'frozen hills', and ends with the sound of 'church-bells ring[ing] in the Christmas morn'. If Stephens could not paint outdoors in the snow, preferably by moonlight, he could not present, in Pre-Raphaelite terms, a truly accurate visualisation of the poetic source.

The clear similarities between Stephens's *Morte d'Arthur* and Hunt's *Rienzi* have not previously been recognised. Both paintings adopt a horizontal format with blue sky dominating the upper half and a stretch of bare earth tufted with grass in the immediate foreground. The kneeling figure of King Arthur, clad in a helmet and a sleeveless scarlet tunic over a chain mail suit, almost precisely mirrors the kneeling knight dressed in red on the far left of *Rienzi*, even down to the way that Arthur's bent left leg pokes through the slit in his tunic. *Rienzi*'s white-stockinged shin, thrust

⁴³ *PR&PRB*, 1:91.

⁴⁴ *PR&PRB*, 1:111–15; Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 67.

⁴⁵ Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel opens on 'a summer evening [...] beside the banks of the Tiber'; Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Rienzi, The Last of the Tribunes*, 3 vols. (London: Saunders & Otley, 1835), 1:2–24.

dramatically forward, is echoed in Bedivere's left leg jutting towards the picture plane. Yet *Morte d'Arthur* and *Rienzi* also complement each other on a thematic level. Both scenes focalise the powerful fraternal bonds felt between men in moments of crisis or tragedy. Rienzi, his fist raised and his face fraught with emotion, is vowing to avenge the death of his younger brother slain during a battle.⁴⁶ Meanwhile Sir Bedivere, himself a 'brother' to Arthur in ceremonial terms if not by birth, is carrying out the last orders of his dying king, whom he bears on his back towards the lake. Arthur's heavenward glance, blood-red tunic and near-cruciform pose seem analogous with Christ on the cross. Rienzi is a brother, Bedivere a friend, but both are equally devoted to the men they have either already lost or are on the verge of losing. Hunt and Stephens further articulate male closeness through the placement of the men's hands. The interlocking fingers of Arthur and Bedivere, among the most finished elements in *Morte d'Arthur*, suggest both tenderness and strength.

There is an autobiographical context for this concentration on close male interactions. Elizabeth Prettejohn has called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in its early days 'a male homosocial community [...] a group of men whose relationships combine the mutual furtherance of professional interests with strong bonds of affection'. She goes on to cite Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theories on homosocial relationships – differentiated from homosexual – as useful for considering the 'bonds of affection among the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers'.⁴⁷ A brotherhood by definition excludes women, and women have no conceivable role to play in the self-contained, same-sex worlds of *Rienzi* and *Morte d'Arthur*, with their mutual emphasis on brotherly valour. (The mother and child group on the hill in the background of *Rienzi* were added later.)⁴⁸ Hunt's personal bond with Stephens was already evident in the small portrait the former painted of the latter in 1846–7, in which the sitter directs his gaze not only at the eventual viewer of the finished picture, but also at the painter himself at close quarters during the hours of its execution.

⁴⁶ A subject from fourteenth-century Italian history that was valorised by Edward Bulwer-Lytton in his novel *Rienzi, The Last of the Roman Tribunes* in 1835. An extract from Bulwer-Lytton's novel accompanied Hunt's painting when it was exhibited at the RA in 1849.

⁴⁷ Prettejohn, *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 38; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

⁴⁸ '[Hunt has] put into his picture the figures of a [mother and child coming over the top] of the hill'; *PRBJ*, 12 (24 August 1849).

The most striking difference between *Morte d'Arthur* and *Rienzi* is that Stephens's picture is devoid of the pictorial clutter of knights, horses, weapons and trees deployed by Hunt. By contrast, Stephens isolates his central figures in a flat, barren landscape with no other people in sight; the painting is far enough advanced for it to be clear that he did not plan to include additional figures. Millais made a similar decision when he painted two girls against a plain background in *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* (1851), which was originally planned as a much larger, busier composition. *Morte d'Arthur* can even be taken as the earliest in a sequence of Pre-Raphaelite images that foreground psychological or emotional exchanges between isolated pairs of figures, among them D. G. Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (Fig. 23), Millais's *A Huguenot* (1851–2; The Makins Collection, Washington, DC) and Hunt's *Claudio and Isabella* (1850–3; Tate).

Having said this, one must be careful not to overstate the case – to suggest that Stephens, the least confident and the most self-effacing of Pre-Raphaelite artists, originated such pictorial innovations in a small, unfinished panel that never left his studio. If *Morte d'Arthur* had been finished to the Brotherhood's high standards and subsequently exhibited, it might have more of a claim. Although some of the Pre-Raphaelites would have seen the picture, Stephens did not wield enough influence as an artist within the group to have had a significant impact. It would be more accurate to say that *Morte d'Arthur* anticipates these innovations, particularly given the Brotherhood's communal atmosphere and the tendency of its members to exchange ideas amongst each other. Stephens demonstrates the ideas of form and composition with which the Brotherhood was experimenting at this time, paring down the drama of a subject into the simplest visual terms.

Much can therefore be drawn from Stephens's least finished artwork. *Morte d'Arthur* is the earliest Pre-Raphaelite image to present a subject from Tennyson's poetry, and among the earliest in Victorian art to portray the final moments of King Arthur. The picture's visual and thematic connections with Hunt's *Rienzi*, and its emphasis on male closeness, makes it a product of Pre-Raphaelite fraternal masculinity. A visualisation of a poem, *Morte d'Arthur* expresses the PRB's preoccupation with the intertwining of image and text, art and literature. That Stephens wrote an Arthurian-themed poem only enhances this intertextuality.

Medieval Dreams: Stephens's King Arthur Poem

At the same time as painting *Morte d'Arthur*, Stephens wrote a poem of an imagined Arthurian subject, which was long thought to have been lost. I have discovered four manuscript fragments in the Bodleian Library and the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum which are all part of the same projected epic (Appendix 3, Nos. 1–4). They reveal that Stephens's unfinished painting was not intended to illustrate his poem, as some scholars have speculated, but that the text was envisioned as a separate creative project.⁴⁹

While Tennyson reworked pre-existing episodes from Sir Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century text *Le Morte d'Arthur* for his Arthurian poems, Stephens delved deeper into the medieval sources. On the same sheet as the extracts from Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' mentioned earlier in this chapter (Fig. 24), he wrote out a long list of 'Authorities relative to King Arthur'. These included Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century chronicle *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*) (ca. 1136), Thomas Chestre's Middle English romance *Sir Launfal* and the original French lay of this tale by Marie de France, the first edition of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* printed by William Caxton (1485) and Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (1612).⁵⁰ Many of these works were found in manuscripts in the British Museum, and given Stephens's scholarly interests it is likely that he went to consult them in person.⁵¹ He wished to formulate an archaic subject inspired by his antiquarian research and invigorate it with a modern poetic style influenced by Robert Browning and Tennyson. The poem does not attempt to mimic an ancient ballad or medieval lyric, but uses the vivid clarity of Wordsworth and Browning as a guide. In this way the poem correlates with the *Morte d'Arthur* painting, which also presents an historical scene with a startling immediacy.

⁴⁹ Mancoff, *Arthurian Revival*, 143: 'The extent to which Stephens's unfinished painting illustrates his lost poem cannot be judged'.

⁵⁰ The full list reads as follows: '[1] Geoffrey of Monmouth Chronicle / [2] [Thomas] Warton, History of English Poetry / [3] Romance of Le Morte Arthur one of the first Books printed in England, Caxton 1485 / [4] [Paul Henri] Mallet Northern Antiquities / [5] A Manuscript of the Romance of "Le Morte Arthur" exists in the Harlian MSS No. 2252 / §49 / [6] Also another in the Cottonian Library 'Syr Launful, Caligula A. 2 [illegible] 33 of the original in old French in the Harleian MSS No. 978, section 112 Lanval / [7] Gawan and [Gologras], a metrical romance, printed in Edinburgh 1508 8vo. / [8] [Charles] Burney's History of Music / [9] [Michael] Drayton's Poly-Olbion, [John] Selden's Notes / [10] The Seven Champions of Christendom by Richard Johnson about 1592 to 1612 / [11] The Romance of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table / [12] The Romance of "Le Morte Arthur" [illegible] reprinted since the Caxton / [13] Milton's History of England [1670] / [14] [Thomas] Warton Poetical Works'.

⁵¹ Later in 1849, Stephens was commissioned by Clarence Hopper to produce copies of illuminations in the British Museum; see Appendix 1, No. 33.

The fragments of the ‘Arthur’ poem can be placed in the following order. The opening section (Appendix 3, No. 1) introduces an unnamed first-person narrator who stands in the shadow of an ancient monolith and is transported back to the Middle Ages in a dream. The next longer fragment (Appendix 3, Nos. 2–3) finds the narrator hiding in a thicket in a forest, observing the approach of two knights who are lost. One of the knights is dressed in white and has the bearing of a king, and addresses the other knight as ‘Gawaine’. The white knight’s hound then scents the narrator in the bushes and alerts the men, compelling the narrator to step out and show himself. He explains that he is ‘a Breton, a minstrel, a singer’, who is travelling to the ships that will take him back to France; he particularly wishes to travel with King Arthur, of whom he has heard much. At this the white knight reveals himself to be none other than Arthur (as if it was not already obvious) and asks the narrator to show him and Sir Gawaine the way through the forest, in exchange for which he can join the royal household. The narrator agrees and the three set off. A few hours into the journey, Gawaine asks the minstrel if he knows a place where they can rest and hear a song or two. The narrator leads the knights into a cave in which a ‘runic king’ is rumoured to have been buried long before, at which point the poem cuts off. Another fragment (Appendix 3, No. 5), beginning ‘In the cave underground / My troops are found’, may relate to this part of the narrative. The last, shortest fragment, which is awkwardly written and does not scan well, and was scrawled on the back of Stephens’s letter to James Buchanan of the Liverpool Exhibition from July 1849 (Appendix 3, No. 4), cuts to Arthur’s voyage across the sea to Brittany, where he and many knights go to Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. This last passage bears the influence of Sir Walter Scott’s poem ‘The Bridal of Triermain’, from which Stephens derived the names of some obscure knights (Sirs Banier and Bore).⁵² Quite what Stephens intended to happen next cannot be ascertained.

‘Arthur’ is somewhat comparable in its narrative structure to Tennyson’s ‘Morte d’Arthur’, which is bookended by events in the present day. It is prefaced with another poem, ‘The Epic’, which describes a gathering of young men on Christmas Eve who beseech their friend, the poet Everard Hall, to read part of ‘[h]is epic, his King Arthur’. After the fragment from this epic – the poem ‘Morte d’Arthur’ – has been recited, the unnamed narrator retires to bed, ‘where yet in sleep I seem’d / To

⁵² See Appendix 3, No. 4, note 9.

sail with Arthur under looming shores'. A similarly sensitive and imaginative individual narrates

Stephens's poem:

The shadow of pillar o'er me thrown
 By the sun's bright radiance cast,
 To me appeared as song, tale or lay
 Of warlike times long past,
 Dreamy, and dim and purple-grey:
 Before me that long shadow lay
 And moved on from my feet. (Appendix 3, No. 1, ll. 4–15)

The monolith functions like a sundial's gnomon, tracing its shadow across the ground at a liminal time of day that is neither morning nor afternoon; the narrator is standing so still that he can actually watch its slow movement marking the passage of time. This air of suspension between two states is heightened by the clash of vivid colours – the 'sun's bright radiance' from the real world is filtered into the 'purple-grey' of the narrator's visions. It is clear from the outset that Stephens's descriptive language is generally uncomplicated, his adjectives short and direct. A few lines ahead in the manuscript he can be seen trying out variations of a phrase to see which sounds best rhythmically and visually. He describes a 'pennon, flag, and cloth of gold' that could alternatively be 'Out-flaring in the sun' or 'Out-spread in the broad sun', while for the next line he puzzles between 'The knights and steeds of old' and 'The proud-horsed knights of old'. Neither possibility is crossed out; he wished to return to them later with a fresh eye. In each instance, too, the adjectives are more functional than flamboyant, deploying the low register of old English ballads. This signifies the kinship which Stephens felt with writers who were viewed as belonging to the 'Cockney School', such as Keats and Tennyson, whose use of simplistic poetic language was underpinned with 'low-class' assumptions.

After a deliberate pause, indicated by a break and a line, the second half of this opening fragment visualises the dreamer's moment of physical transition into the past. The narrator falls asleep, 'And back two thousand years had past away, / I heard no more the steam-car's warning scream, [...] nor ever came / Deep vibrant rumblings from the earth beneath'. This typically Romantic rejection of industrial progress is perhaps unsurprising. However, it should not be conflated with Stephens's own beliefs: after all, he had worked voluntarily as a railway surveyor in Oxford in 1845, and would later insist of the beauty of 'steam vessels' in his *Germ* essay 'Modern Giants'. The narrator is transported through the country's ancient past:

I slept and past the Druid time, the Danish,

And the Roman's murd'rous faith, for Arthur
 Was living, all the land was forest thick,
 Stonehenge had just been placed, Merlin late
 From Ireland brought the mass, and placed stones round
 In circles great. (Appendix 3, No. 1, ll. 32–37)

Stephens has drawn this legend of Merlin constructing Stonehenge from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. A revised edition of Aaron Thompson's 1718 English translation of Monmouth's Latin text, with notes by John Allen Giles, was published in 1842, and Stephens appears to have adapted part of it for his own composition: '[Aurelius Ambrosius] ordered Merlin to set up the stones brought over from Ireland, about the sepulchre: which he accordingly did, and placed them in the same manner as they had been in the mountain Killaraus'.⁵³ Stonehenge is similarly 'placed' in Stephens's poem, using stones 'From Ireland brought'. Dream visions were also a common device in English medieval poetry, such as William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1370–90) and Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (ca. 1386–88), featuring protagonists who fall asleep at the beginning of the poem and experience visions of an allegorical or chivalric nature.

At its best, Stephens's poem displays an abundance of pictorial detail, worth quoting at length:

[...] and soon
 An armêd foot upon the stones,
 Crashing and breaking o'er the twigs,
 Gave token of the wearer's presence.
 Stretching an arm before him
 To force an oak's low branches back,
 Full on my view the warrior came,
 Clad all in mail and over that a white garment,
 White, without a blazon, all unstained,
 And yet he seemed a king, a king, in form, [...]
 Free o'er his shoulders fell his cowl of mail,
 From off the bascinet thrown. (Appendix 3, No. 2, ll. 4–13)

This passage has a breathless quality indicative of a working draft, as Stephens attempts to transfer the hurried accumulation of sound, gesture, colour and costume from his imagination onto the page. He pictures Arthur in the active pose of 'stretching an arm before him' to push back the branches, as he might do in a painting. It is possible to hear the dynamic 'crashing and breaking' of Arthur's 'armêd foot upon the stones' as an aural echo of Bedivere's armoured feet ringing and clanging on the 'juts of slippery crag' in Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur', mentioned earlier in this chapter. Not only is

⁵³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The British History of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, trans A. Thompson, ed. J. A. Giles (London: J. Bohn, 1842), 160.

the knight's surcoat 'white', but it is also 'without a blazon' (a coat of arms) as well as being 'all unstained'. The pure white of Arthur's garment can be contrasted with the blood-red that defines him in *Morte d'Arthur*, establishing a Christlike role for the king and emblematising both his virtue and his eventual sacrifice. Other significant details include the specificity of Arthur's 'straight brows' and 'short, curled, dark brown' beard that could almost have been sketched from a real-life model. All this is observed by the minstrel from his hiding place, although this only becomes apparent in line 50, when Arthur's hound Castor heads 'straight for my covert' and the third-person omniscient narrator is revealed to be a first-person witness of the events – none other than the dreamer who fell asleep in the first fragment.

Like the *Morte d'Arthur* painting, 'Arthur' is preoccupied with close interactions between men. Women are absent, and when 'love's sweet lay' and notions of 'chivalry' are invoked, it is hard to see them applied to any particular feminine presence. Men of action (Arthur and Gawaine) form bonds with men of thought (the narrator), establishing a harmony between warrior and poet. Arthur, of course, is intended as a model of masculine brilliance, blending sensitivity with courage; indeed Tennyson, at the end of 'Morte d'Arthur', likens him to 'a modern gentleman / Of stateliest port'. His 'unstained' white garment implies a chasteness akin to Tennyson's 'Sir Galahad' – a poem Stephens would go on to quote in his essay 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art' in the *Germ*, and which appealed to the Brotherhood's preference for 'chaste male enclosure'.

The 'Arthur' fragments are supported by the *PRB Journal* for 26 July 1849, when Hunt, Collinson and the Rossetti brothers visited Stephens to 'read over his poem of Arthur', although W. M. Rossetti does not record their opinions of the work.⁵⁴ Woolner was unable to join them because of a boil on his knee, so Stephens visited him separately to read 'Arthur' aloud to him. 'Go on with your King Arthur', Woolner wrote to his 'Dear Brother Stephens' afterwards; 'what you read me was stunning old boy'.⁵⁵ Thus encouraged, Stephens persevered with his poetry and produced several more pieces, one of which will be examined in Chapter 4. When, on 30 June 1849, W. M. Rossetti wrote to Stephens to thank him for some verses the latter had sent him, he said that they 'enlivened [him] tremendously':

⁵⁴ *PRBJ*, 9.

⁵⁵ TW to FGS, undated (July 1849), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 80, f. 2.

I have copied them out that I may be able to read them henceforward without my eyes falling out. But I don't understand the 1st verse of stanza 4, which I decipher 'For this dreadful dense desiring': – And why the inscrutable blank at the end of stanza 7?⁵⁶

Rossetti would not have been so critical if the poem in question had been merely light or comic. It might have been an early version of 'Arthur', although the surviving fragments are written in blank verse rather than structured stanzas.

Stephens expressed his enthusiasm for Arthurian medievalism in painting and verse alike, though he left both works unfinished. He did not develop the poem beyond its draft stage and probably had no intention to publish it; instead, it was a vehicle for externalising his private fantasies of an imagined world of chivalry and romance. The type of the Victorian dreamer transported into the Middle Ages through their imagination was embodied anew some years later in Burne-Jones, then a student at Oxford. In a letter to his family in January 1854, he described a walk along the riverbank near the ruined Godstow priory during which he experienced powerful hallucinations of knights, ladies 'and all the pageantry of the golden age'. He unconsciously echoed the industrial imagery of Stephens's 1849 poem ('I heard no more the steam-car's warning scream / Before it plunged in night') when he wrote about 'the wreathing of steam upon the trees where the railway runs' breaking the illusion and pulling him unwillingly back to reality.⁵⁷ A similar sentiment was further echoed in William Morris's famed prologue for *The Earthly Paradise* published in 1868: 'Forget six counties overhung with smoke / Forget the snorting steam and piston stroke, / Forget the spreading of the hideous town; / Think rather of the pack-horse on the down, / And dream of London, small, and white, and clean'.⁵⁸ For Stephens, Burne-Jones and Morris, the phenomena of steam and noisy engines – 'the steam-car's warning scream', 'snorting steam', 'the wreathing of steam' – marked the contrast between the obtrusive industrialised present which they inhabited, and the ideal medieval past about which they dreamt. Of course, it is impossible that either Burne-Jones or Morris would have seen Stephens's unpublished manuscript (they did not even discover Pre-Raphaelitism until later that year), and it is not certain that Morris read Burne-Jones's letter – although, as close friends, they would have discussed such ideas. Still, we can see that the three young men felt the same sense of

⁵⁶ In Peattie, *Selected Letters*, 4.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1906), 1:97–98.

⁵⁸ William Morris, *The Earthly Paradise: A Poem* (London: F. S. Ellis, 1868), p. 3, ll. 1–3.

disillusionment with present-day advancements. They were also inspired by the same literary sources: Morris and Burne-Jones acquired a copy of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* and read it with enthusiasm, as Stephens had done.⁵⁹ In 1857, D. G. Rossetti enlisted Morris and Burne-Jones to help him paint the new debating chamber of the Oxford Union with large murals illustrating scenes from Malory's book, and the following year Morris published *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*. Morris's early prose romances written for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, such as *The Story of the Unknown Church*, *A Dream* and *Lindenberg Pool*, also combine dreamlike states of mind with visions of the Middle Ages, from the perspectives of first-person narrators. Arthurian medievalism became both an artistic and a literary preoccupation, and Stephens was the first Pre-Raphaelite to attempt both. This intermediality continued in his artworks inspired by another authentic medieval text, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which will be explored in the next chapter.

⁵⁹ Burne-Jones, *Memorials*, 1:116–17.

Chapter 3: Paintings and Drawings in the Early 1850s

The previous chapter examined Stephens's early art and poetry as a member of the PRB in 1848–9. The dominant medievalism of his *Morte d'Arthur* painting and 'Arthur' poem inflected his next major artistic project, which I will discuss in this chapter. In 1850 Stephens was busy with work that included commissions as well as his own original designs. From February until June he produced a replica of a Hans Holbein portrait for James Wyatt Jr. of Oxford, a commission passed to him by Millais. In September, he assisted Hunt with the restoration of eighteenth-century frescoes by John Francis Rigaud in Trinity House near the Tower of London, for which he was paid two guineas per day.¹ Since November 1849, he had been occupied in making copies from numerous prints and drawings at the British Museum, which letters from one Clarence Hopper indicate he was still undertaking throughout 1850.²

In the midst of all this activity, the young artist, undeterred by his inability to finish *Morte d'Arthur* the previous year, began a second narrative oil painting which he intended to submit to the RA exhibition. Titled *The Proposal*, it depicts a pivotal scene from *The Clerk's Tale* by Chaucer – the story of 'patient' Griselda and her torturous marriage to the Marquis of Saluzzo in medieval Italy.³ The painting has received little critical attention from art historians and was dismissed by one scholar as 'rigid and uninspired'.⁴ However, the picture's iconography is more complex than might be first apparent, and the painting can be closely compared with other Pre-Raphaelite works which explore similar issues of class and gender inequalities within historical settings. Stephens's interest in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was further expressed in his large drawing, *Dethe and the Riotours*, now in the Ashmolean Museum, some early sketches for which I have discovered.⁵ These works on paper, which will also be addressed in this chapter, provide additional insights into Stephens's creative process, and also his desire to make art that was of human interest and had a strong moral message.

¹ *PR&PRB*, 1:228–29.

² See Appendix 1, No. 33.

³ Also known as *The Marquis and Griselda*. The painting bore the title *The Proposal* when it was bequeathed to the Tate in 1932; Tate bequest file, TG 4/4/146/1.

⁴ Macleod, 'Stephens', 398.

⁵ See Appendix 1, No. 2.

Copying Holbein: Stephens's *William Warham*

In early February 1850 Stephens received the commission for the Holbein replica, as W. M. Rossetti noted on 2 February: 'Millais has had an offer from Oxford to paint a copy of a portrait by Holbein, which, as he does not feel disposed to accept, he offered to Stephens, who will do it after the opening of the Exhibition'.⁶ The commission came from the Wyatts of Oxford, familiar figures in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship because of their early patronage of Millais. Millais first met James Wyatt Sr. (1774–1853), a frame-maker, print seller and art dealer, while he was staying with his half-brother in Oxford in the summer of 1846. According to John Guille Millais, Wyatt 'took an immediate fancy to "Johnny Millais"', and between the years 1846 and 1849 the young artist made frequent visits to Oxford as his guest'.⁷ Wyatt lived above his shop at 115 High Street. He purchased Millais's *Cymon and Iphigenia* in 1849, and commissioned family portraits from the artist in 1849–50. In February 1850, however, Millais was engaged on more ambitious paintings, including *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849–50), and the prospect of spending time on a replica did not appeal. It was not uncommon for the Pre-Raphaelites to paint copies of the Old Masters early in their careers: Hunt painted numerous replicas of works by Rubens, Titian, Van Dyck and Veronese in the mid-1840s, before he began producing his own compositions.⁸

On 9 March, James Wyatt Jr., who helped with his father's business, wrote to Stephens with more details of the project:

It happens to be vacation here at this time, & the various parties I could get you introductions from are away from Oxford. I do not know the Archbishop personally; but two of his sons were customers of mine during their residence at Balliol College; but if you have the opportunity of stating as much, you can say it is intended to plan the copy in the Hall of New College at Oxford of which society he (A[rch].B[ishop]. Warham) was a member.⁹

William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1502 until his death in 1532, was a notable alumnus of New College. When Hans Holbein the Younger arrived in England in 1527, Warham was one of his first sitters. Holbein made a small chalk drawing (1527; Royal Collection, Windsor Castle) and painted two portraits, one of which Warham sent to Erasmus of Rotterdam (now untraced), and

⁶ *PRBJ*, 51 (2 February 1850).

⁷ Millais, *Life and Letters of Millais*, 1:35.

⁸ Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:89 (copy of Van Dyck's *Virgin and Child with St Catherine*), 97 (copy of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*), 98 (copy of Veronese's *Consecration of St Nicholas*), 100–1 (copy of Rubens's *Minerva Protects Pax from Mars*).

⁹ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 170–71.

the other which was intended for Lambeth Palace in Westminster.¹⁰ The latter version, now accepted to be the original by Holbein, is now in the Louvre (Fig. 26), having been sold later in the sixteenth century to Andreas de Loo, and eventually acquired by Louis XIV in 1671.¹¹ At some point in the sixteenth century, Lambeth Palace commissioned a copy of the portrait to replace the original (Fig. 27); although, as will be shown in due course, the situation in 1850 was rather more complicated.

Holbein's work resonated with other artists in the early Pre-Raphaelite circle. On his way to Italy in the mid-1840s, Ford Madox Brown had stopped at the Basle Museum and viewed several works by the artist, in whom he found 'a kindred spirit'.¹² When, in 1845, he painted a portrait of James Bamford, he referred to it as a '*Holbein of the nineteenth century*'.¹³ The German painter's influence can also be seen in John Rogers Herbert's likeness of Augustus Pugin, exhibited at the RA in 1845; and closer to Stephens, in the small panel portraits of Thomas Wyatt and William Bennett painted by Millais and Charles Allston Collins respectively in 1850. Herbert, Millais and Collins deploy the same archaising compositional elements: the sitters seated in half-length, turning to face the viewer, against flat backgrounds which are either plain or densely patterned, and with heraldic coats of arms in the upper corners. Herbert's *Pugin* continues a visual format set not only by Holbein's *William Warham*, but also by *Erasmus* (1523; National Gallery, London) and *Georg Giszze* (1532; Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), of showing the individual seated behind a table and surrounded by the objects of their profession.

In order to make studies for his replica, Stephens had to gain access to the painting at Lambeth Palace. As Duval has pointed out, at this time he was still living with his family at 59 Walcot Place in Lambeth, only a few minutes' walk from the Palace.¹⁴ Stephens later told Hunt that he had called on the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Bird Sumner (1780–1862), a total of five times, apparently without success.¹⁵ To complicate matters, Stephens discovered that there was more than

¹⁰ <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/912272/william-warham-c-1450-1532-archbishop-of-canterbury>.

¹¹ Roy Strong, 'Holbein in England – III to V', *Burlington Magazine* 109, no. 777 (December 1967): 701.

¹² Ford Madox Hueffer, *Ford Madox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1896), 409.

¹³ Julian Treuherz, *Ford Madox Brown: A Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer* (Manchester: Manchester Art Gallery, 2011), 120.

¹⁴ Duval, 'Stephens', 27.

¹⁵ FGS to WHH, 29 November 1850, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

one version of the portrait, as Wyatt Jr. wrote to him on 3 April: ‘I am not aware how many copies there may be of Holbeins [sic] Portrait of A. B. Warham at Lambeth but I imagine the genuine picture by Holbein could not be easily mistaken; it is most likely that the true picture would be in the Library’.¹⁶ However, as Stephens’s visits coincided with the Gorham controversy of 1847–51, Wyatt feared that Archbishop Sumner ‘will be much engaged in his Library, [...] but if [the painting] can be removed to another room that would indeed be a favour’.¹⁷ Stephens used George Vertue’s 1737 engraving of the painting (Fig. 28) as a reference tool, as Wyatt wrote in the same letter that he knew the print ‘very well indeed’. It is worth noting that the caption beneath Vertue’s engraving attributes the ‘excellent Original in the Arch-Bishop’s Palace at Lambeth’ to Holbein himself.

As we have seen, Stephens was also struggling to finish *The Proposal* in time for the 1850 RA exhibition. Wyatt Jr. wrote to him on 15 April to recount a recent conversation with Charles Atmore Ogilvie, who ‘knew the Pictures at Lambeth very well’:

I enquired which was considered the original painting by Holbein of A B Warham. [Ogilvie] answered without hesitation that it hung in the large Dining Hall, which was formerly the armoury; therefore I shall be quite content to have the best of the two copied. You may have the opportunity of looking again at the one in the private Library during your visits to the Palace & judge a little further of the quality of the prohibited one. I am truly sorry you should have had so much trouble concerning it, but if I had not the additional testimony of Dr Ogilvie I should not have thought of trespassing further.¹⁸

Less than a month later Stephens received another letter from Wyatt asking for an update of his progress and for ‘a little sketch of the Frame; as I am anxious to prepare a frame ready for it’.¹⁹ Wyatt was keen to receive the painting before 6 June, when Oxford University broke up for the summer vacation and its members would be absent until October. Hearing nothing from Stephens, Wyatt wrote again on 5 June: ‘Perhaps you can now tell me the day I can have the picture; this is just the time for me provided it is ready’.²⁰ Millais also wrote to Stephens on 11 June asking if he had finished the painting.²¹ When Stephens finally sent the picture to Oxford later that month, it arrived too late to be shown to the members of New College whom Wyatt hoped would purchase it, as a letter on 27 June states:

I wished to give [the painting] a careful look over, it would of course have been satisfactory to me could I

¹⁶ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 172.

¹⁷ For the Gorham controversy see Carol Engelhardt Herringer, *Victorians and the Virgin Mary: Religion and Gender in England, 1830–85* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 118.

¹⁸ 6 May 1850, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 174–75.

¹⁹ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 176.

²⁰ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 177.

²¹ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, f. 27–28.

could have seen it by the side of the one from which you copied it[.] I am sure you have done your utmost with it, but if the fur, background & some other parts are strictly to what you have copied, I should certainly say it was not the original by Holbein.²²

Was Wyatt criticising Stephens's handiwork, or the perceived faults of the 'original' painting at Lambeth Palace? If the artist had been precise in his copying, he was therefore bound to replicate the errors of the older picture. Indeed, it is difficult to know which version of the portrait Stephens used as the basis for his own copy. Wyatt's letters indicate that there were at least two versions at Lambeth Palace: one in the dining hall (which Charles Ogilvie declared was by Holbein), the other in the Archbishop's private library. However, J. Cave-Browne's *Lambeth Palace and its Associations*, published in 1883, describes as many as three versions: one in the dining hall, which was indeed considered 'a genuine Holbein'; a second 'In the private library of the Archbishop, [...] inserted in the wainscoting over the fireplace', which was 'probably a copy of the Holbein' but 'full of interest in itself'; and a third, 'equally striking, and only differing in the colour of the background', which was 'formerly at Lambeth' but by 1883 had been transferred to the Archbishop's country residence, Addington Palace.²³ Stephens would therefore have arrived at Lambeth Palace in 1850 only to discover three versions of the same portrait – a confusing prospect for a copyist. Wyatt had asked him to copy only the 'best' of them, yet Stephens's finished picture did not satisfactorily 'resemble the original'. Precisely which version was the 'original', then, is difficult to ascertain. Today, Lambeth Palace owns only one copy of the portrait (Fig. 27) – presumably that from the dining hall, which had long been regarded as an authentic Holbein.

No further correspondence between Wyatt and Stephens exists after June 1850, but the unhappy picture reemerges in a letter from Stephens to Hunt on 29 November:

I should like to get my Easel, having spoken to Millais about the chances of doing anything more to the Holbein, which he thinks will not occur. There will be no more tin from that quarter, tho' by the Lord, it paid worse, even with your assistance, than the Guernsey drawings, and they were bad enough. Johnny [Millais] tells me that Mr Wyatt had something done to the parts he was dissatisfied with. This is what I got by it. £10, from which take

Vail to Porter	5
— to Flunkey	10
Packing case	4
Carriage to Oxford	2
Value of colours	2, very low!
and gilding (including	

²² Wyatt to FGS, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 179–80.

²³ J. Cave-Browne, *Lambeth Palace and its Associations* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1883), 125–29. Addington Palace was the summer residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury from 1807–98, when it was sold to Frederick Alexander English. It is now owned by a private company as a wedding venue.

cadmium)	
Porterage	2
Porterage	1
	£1..6.

This does not include value of time in five calls on H.G. of Cant[erbury], cost of cards left, note-paper, Boat Leather [...] You will see that I am Arithmetical and sad withal.²⁴

Stephens's letter reveals that Wyatt, having been dissatisfied with certain parts of the picture when he received it in June, took steps to have 'something done' to them, despite Stephens's hopes of 'doing anything more' to it himself. Wyatt would therefore have hired another artist, probably locally from Oxford, to retouch the areas of the painting which displeased him: the fur, background and 'some other parts', as he outlined in his letter of 27 June. Having done this, Wyatt offered the painting to New College in the spring of 1851. A subscription letter was circulated among interested members of the College, informing them that '[t]he picture has been carefully copied from the original in Holbein, still preserved in the collection at Lambeth Palace; and may be seen by application to Mr Wyatt'.²⁵ Wyatt priced the painting at 40 guineas, and it was soon purchased by the College with funds from 30 subscribers for £42, as shown by a receipt dated 2 April 1851 in New College Archives. Wyatt therefore made a profit of £32 from the painting; Stephens, deducting art material and postage costs, received just under £9 for his efforts.

Besides this documentary evidence, there are stylistic elements in the New College picture which suggest Stephens's hand. The rendering of light and shade on the lower part of the sleeve of Warham's left arm is reminiscent of similar effects in Stephens's *Proposal* (Fig. 4), which was painted at the same time. Close examination of the painting shows that some areas of the composition appear to have been quite crudely overpainted – in particular Warham's dark fur stole and cuffs and his cap. The flat, opaque quality of the fur, lacking in detail, does not cohere with the finely painted passages of Warham's white vestment. This would confirm Wyatt's criticisms of the paintings in his letter, and Millais's report that Wyatt 'had something done to the parts he was dissatisfied with'.

This wealth of documentary evidence is confounded by the puzzling inscription on the back of the New College picture: 'Copied by E. J. Williams. 1850. From the original painting at Lambeth Palace'. Mrs. Reginald Lane Poole's 1925 catalogue of the portraits at New College states that the

²⁴ WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁵ Three copies of the subscription letter are in the New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 1161, with lists of the subscribers who contributed to the purchase of the painting.

painting was ‘Copied by E. G. [sic] Williams in 1850, from the picture at Lambeth Palace by Hans Holbein’.²⁶ Given that Wyatt took steps to have the painting altered after he had received it from Stephens, Williams was probably the artist hired to do the retouching. The subscription letter does not mention the name of any artist, let alone Stephens or Williams, in connection with the painting. It is therefore difficult to know how or when Williams’s name became attached to the picture, or indeed who he was.²⁷ The inscription may have been written by Wyatt himself, and he did not think it important to credit the first artist given that the picture was only a copy. It is unlikely that two artists were commissioned to produce separate copies of the same Holbein painting in the same year, for the same Oxford college. On balance, there is considerably more primary evidence to support Stephens as the original copyist, and his name was simply lost in the process.

‘Patient’ Griselda: *The Proposal* and its Pre-Raphaelite Context

Whilst painting the Holbein replica, Stephens was able to develop his own original design based on the tale of ‘Patient Griselda’. The maiden features in the works of the Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio and the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. Both were fourteenth-century authors included on the PRB’s ‘List of Immortals’ in 1848, Boccaccio with one star and Chaucer with two. Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (ca. 1348–53) had already provided, by way of Keats’s 1818 poem ‘Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil’, the subject for Millais’s *Isabella* (1848–9). Meanwhile, Chaucer himself had been portrayed by Madox Brown as the central figure in a design imagining the origins of English literature, *The Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry* (1845–53), and as an onlooker in *The First Translation of the Bible into English: Wycliffe Reading his Translation of the New Testament* (1847–8; reworked 1859–60), a scene from the fourteenth century.²⁸ Nevertheless, as one scholar has noted, Brown’s paintings ‘were recreating a scene from history (albeit undocumented)’, rather than depicting a specific narrative incident from Chaucer’s verses.²⁹

²⁶ Mrs. R. L. Poole, *Catalogue of Portraits in the Possession of the University, Colleges, City and County of Oxford*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 2:149.

²⁷ One candidate could be the landscape painter Edward Williams (1781–1855), although he had no middle name and a successful artist is unlikely to have undertaken such a commission in his old age.

²⁸ Brown replicated the central panel of *The Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry* in a much larger canvas, *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III*, in 1851; for all three compositions see Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 52–57.

²⁹ Joanna Banham and Jennifer Harris, eds., *William Morris and the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 194.

For Stephens, it was the English retelling of the Griselda story that provided the source for his painting – indeed, just as he had been the first Pre-Raphaelite to illustrate Tennyson in *Morte d'Arthur*, he was also the first Pre-Raphaelite to make a series of designs based on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.³⁰ After *The Proposal* (Fig. 4) and *Dethe and the Riotours*, which will be discussed later in this chapter, it was not until 1859 that Edward Burne-Jones painted a wardrobe with scenes from *The Prioress's Tale* as a wedding present for William and Jane Morris – the first of many Chaucer subjects by Burne-Jones across a wide range of media that included stained glass, tapestries and decorated tiles (illustrating, besides *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Romaunt of the Rose*).³¹ This culminated in the famed 'Kelmscott' edition of Chaucer's works, published by William Morris's Kelmscott Press in 1896 with 87 woodcut illustrations by Burne-Jones.

Therefore, unlike Stephens's *Morte d'Arthur*, which channels a Victorian literary vision of the Middle Ages as evoked by Tennyson, *The Proposal* draws from an authentic medieval source. The realism of *The Canterbury Tales* was interpreted by Stephens as indicative of Chaucer's 'power of pure perception' in his essay for the *Germ*, 'Modern Giants': 'So – reading the glorious tale of Griselda and looking about you, you say there never was such a woman; your wise men say she was a fool; are there no such fools round about you? Pray look close'.³² Chaucer was regarded as a poet of the people who championed, in Tim Barringer's words, 'sturdy, vernacular verse, alert to the innermost feelings of humble individuals'.³³ The situation of *The Clerk's Tale* could equally be applied to women in the present moment, addressing a woman's expected subservience to the dominant male forces in her life – as will be discussed presently.

The plot of *The Clerk's Tale* is as follows. In Saluzzo in northern Italy lives a marquis named Walter (anglicised from Gualtieri in Boccaccio's version), who is more concerned with leisurely aristocratic pursuits than with settling down to marry. After being begged to do so by his courtiers, he decides to go out and find a wife. He happens upon Janicula, a poor, aged man, and his young

³⁰ Robert Upstone, *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream: Paintings and Drawings in the Tate Collection* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), 40, also makes this point.

³¹ Banham and Harris, *William Morris*, 194–211.

³² *Germ*, 172.

³³ Barringer, Rosenfeld and Smith, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 33.

daughter Griselda, who live in a tiny cottage in a village near Walter's palace. Captivated by Griselda's beauty, Walter proposes to her and she accepts. When Griselda gives birth to a daughter, Walter decides to test his wife's faithfulness to him by subjecting her to a series of trials. First, he pretends to kidnap and murder their daughter, then their infant son, while secretly sending the children to Bologna. Griselda remains meek, patient and obedient throughout. Finally, Walter shames Griselda in public, announces their divorce and claims he has found a better second wife, who is coming from Bologna. He asks Griselda to be a servant at the wedding, to which she also assents ('My heart can never rest / Save in the ceaseless will to love you best').³⁴ Walter's new bride is in fact their young daughter, while the bride's brother is their son. When Griselda wishes the bride well, Walter reveals her children's true identities and reunites them with their mother, who is restored to her place in the marquis's palace, having proved her 'wifely steadfastness'.

The tale of Griselda had been regularly illustrated by artists in Britain since the eighteenth century. John Francis Rigaud exhibited two scenes from the story at the RA in 1785, *Griselda Returning to her Father* and *Gualtherus and Griselda*; the latter was issued as a colour print (Fig. 29). Angelica Kauffmann also painted the scene of the marquis proposing to Griselda. Some decades later, Richard Redgrave painted *The Patience of Griselda*, shown at the Academy in 1837 and at the British Institution in 1838. Charles West Cope, one of the artists commissioned to paint frescoes for the newly built Palace of Westminster, chose to portray *Griselda's First Trial of Patience* for Poets' Hall (now the Upper Waiting Hall) in 1848; a colour study for the fresco was exhibited at the RA the following year.³⁵ Redgrave was prompted to exhibit one more Griselda subject, *Griselda Dressed for the Wedding*, at the RA in 1850; Alfred Elmore's *Griselda* appeared in the same show (Fig. 30). Elmore's treatment of the young woman's first encounter with the Marquis is conventional, with the muted palette, visible brushwork and gestural poses typical of nineteenth-century history painting. *The Clerk's Tale* thus had a currency in Victorian visual culture which Stephens would certainly have been aware of, and he responded by creating his own innovative interpretation.

On 2 February 1850, W. M. Rossetti recorded that 'Stephens has made a design from the

³⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, trans. Nevill Coghill (London: Penguin, 2003), 349.

³⁵ RA 1849, no. 903, 'Coloured study for fresco in House of Lords – Griselda's first trial'; Graves, *Royal Academy*, 2:156.

story of Griseldis of the Marquis's interview with the father; he means to set about painting the subject forthwith, and swears he will have it ready for the Exhibition'.³⁶ On 9 February, Woolner and W. M. Rossetti visited Stephens, who 'showed us the design he has made of the Marquis dining in Griseldis's father's house, Griseldis attending, which he means to paint, also two further designs from Chaucer; Griseldis parting from her child'.³⁷ Two days later it was reported that 'Stephens has been prevented from beginning his picture [of the Marquis and Griselda], [...] by the unpunctuality of models', but on the 14th 'Hunt says that Stephens has begun his picture' at last.³⁸ Stephens used a canvas he had purchased from the colourman John Reeves at 98 John Street, Tottenham Court Road, who also supplied canvases for Madox Brown.³⁹ At the same time the Brotherhood was busying itself with the third issue of the *Germ* (which would not be published until 31 March), and Stephens's progress on *The Proposal* was intertwined with this. At an editorial meeting in D. G. Rossetti's study on 9 and 16 February, amid heated discussions about which poems and articles to include in the magazine's next number, 'Stephens says he has begun drawing his on the canvas, and would have got on with it more, had he been able to obtain a Model. He has very greatly altered the design, so much so as almost to make it a new thing'.⁴⁰ No preliminary studies for *The Proposal* survive, so the changes the artist made to his composition for the finished painting can only be imagined. From W. M. Rossetti's comment on 9 February, it can be surmised that Stephens originally intended to show Walter and Janicula dining together, with Griselda standing in attendance, possibly between them at the table. He altered this to the present arrangement, in which the Marquis, seated with Janicula at a small table, has turned on his chair to stop Griselda on her way outside.

Stephens kept his fellow PRBs updated on the picture's development: when Woolner, the Rossetti brothers, the sculptor Bernhard Smith and Madox Brown gathered in D. G. Rossetti's study, Stephens informed them that he was already painting the figure of Walter. The model was a young

³⁶ *PRBJ*, 50–51 (2 February 1850).

³⁷ *PRBJ*, 53 (9 February 1850).

³⁸ *PRBJ*, 53 (11 February 1850), 54 (14 February 1850).

³⁹ A report in the conservation file for *The Proposal* in the Tate Archive, dated October 1955 when the painting was relined on a new canvas, states that on the back of the original canvas was a stencilled mark for 'JOHN REEVES / 98 JOHN ST. / TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD'. The same marks appear on the backs of the canvases of Ford Madox Brown's *Lear and Cordelia* (1848–9; Tate) and the watercolour version of *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet* (1857–8; Tate).

⁴⁰ *PRBJ*, 55 (16 February 1850).

man named F. W. Bassett, a friend of the artist, who on one occasion spent the night with Stephens so that as much progress as possible could be made on the Marquis.⁴¹ However, the artist was yet to show the painting to anyone, or at least not to W. M. Rossetti, who noted on 3 March that it ‘continues for the time being invisible’.⁴² A month later, on 4 April, Stephens lamented ‘the impossibility of finishing his picture in time for the [RA] exhibition’; nevertheless, he was ‘said to be still working steadily at it’.⁴³ He borrowed Charles Rosenberg’s lay figure in the early summer, as he had done for *Morte d’Arthur*, as a letter from Rosenberg on 11 June indicates.⁴⁴ Presumably it was used for the standing figure of Griselda.

In October 1850, following the restoration work at Trinity House, Hunt travelled to Sevenoaks in Kent in order to paint the autumn forest background of *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* (Fig. 86) directly from nature in nearby Knole Park. Stephens accompanied him, taking with him the half-finished picture of the Marquis and Griselda ‘to which he has just returned’.⁴⁵ The two friends initially stayed at an inn called the Rose and Crown outside Sevenoaks, but various inconveniences caused them to move to private lodgings in the town itself, ‘in which’, Stephens wrote to his stepmother, ‘there is a place I want to paint’.⁴⁶ This was at the house of a Mrs Hearnden on the High Street in Sevenoaks.⁴⁷ The artists were joined on 23 October by D. G. Rossetti, who wanted to attempt serious outdoor landscape painting for the first (and last) time, and also by Woolner.⁴⁸

While his friends laboured outside, working directly onto their canvases in the cold and rain, Stephens stayed indoors to paint the background of *The Proposal*. ‘The Lodgings we have are very comfortable indeed’, he informed his stepmother Dorothy, ‘and we feed gloriously having awful

⁴¹ *PRBJ*, 60 (3–4 March 1850).

⁴² *PRBJ*, 60 (3 March 1850).

⁴³ *PRBJ*, 68 (4 April 1850).

⁴⁴ ‘I am waiting anxiously for my lay figure, being in great need of it at the present moment. If you can let me have it in a few days I shall be obliged’; Charles Rosenberg to FGS, 11 June 1850, FGSP, MS Don. e. 58, f. 146.

⁴⁵ *PRBJ*, 73 (October 1850).

⁴⁶ FGS to Dorothy Stephens, undated, (16 October 1850), CSRM, 2015.47.105.6. See also WHH to John Lucas Tupper, 22 October 1850, in *A Pre-Raphaelite Friendship: The Correspondence of William Holman Hunt and John Lucas Tupper*, eds. James H. Coombs et al. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1986), 30–31: ‘We went to the Rose and Crown until Stephens came, whose domestic travelling knowledge rescued one from the society of bagmen, and enormous bills, and the affections of an ugly chamber maid’.

⁴⁷ WHH’s letters to Tupper from this trip are addressed from ‘Mrs Hearnden’s, High Street, Sevenoaks’.

⁴⁸ ‘A most wet, miserable, dreary day [...] This style of thing began yesterday, the very day Gabriel left for the purpose of out-of-doors painting’; *PRBJ*, 73 (24 October 1850).

appetites; [...] I am painting in the Washhouse of the house which is convenient'.⁴⁹ The resulting interior is meticulously detailed, capturing the soft play of light through the window and the shadows on the raftered ceiling. An autumn landscape and a white-clouded sky are framed by the doorway and the squared windows; even the faint reflections of trees are visible in the angled glass of the open casement, as they would be in reality. Paint has been applied evenly, with invisible brushwork, across every inch of the canvas. 'I am painting in-doors', Stephens explained to Dorothy: 'My picture will look very different when you see it again'.⁵⁰ That he spent so long painting such a mundane setting – the corner of a draughty wash house – indicates his commitment to Pre-Raphaelite realism, striving to situate Chaucer's characters within a believable domestic environment.

Hunt's letters to a close associate of the PRB, the sculptor and poet John Lucas Tupper, reveal the homosocial environment in which the young painters worked during the Sevenoaks excursion:

Stephens and I are in apartments where we play the bachelor quite gravely, he carves and I help the vegetables, and we bandy compliments, lazy enquiries and replies, he says 'May I trouble you' and I say 'It is a pleasure sir'. [...] 'But he knows a thousand things' [quote from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, canto XCVII]; which leads me to suspect that he has somewhere a little snugger in which he acts the 'Father of a family', another of which he would have here I strongly suspect, if he waited the result of certain evening walks, which he insists upon making by himself.⁵¹

A few days later, Hunt reported that Stephens 'is painting his background most industriously, which improves his picture extraordinarily; he wanders about in an abstracted manner saying "Sensuality is a means so disgusting to age &c"⁵² Here, Stephens is quoting from his first essay for the *Germ*, 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art', published earlier that year, although Hunt has misremembered the phrase: 'Sensuality is a meanness repugnant to youth, and disgusting in age: a degradation at all times'.⁵³ In the same letter, Hunt joked that Stephens would be delivering a lecture 'on ethical morality' – an indication of Stephens's acute social concerns at this time, which will be explained shortly. One more letter from Stephens to his stepmother is worth quoting:

Rossetti you know is down here and is now lying on the sofa asleep, Hunt is smoking with his heels on the hobs, we find it bitterly cold[,] Hunt is painting in the open air, mostly under an umbrella, and continues to sustain himself with wine. [...] [T]hey come home at five o'clock and we dine at six; our old woman [Mrs

⁴⁹ FGS to Dorothy Stephens, Sunday afternoon [20 October 1850], CSRM, 2015.47.105.7. The letter is headed 'Sunday afternoon', which makes it 20 October 1850, as FGS was writing before DGR's arrival on Wednesday 23rd: 'We expected the Rossettis and Woolner but they have not arrived but may come to-morrow'.

⁵⁰ FGS to Dorothy Stephens, Friday night [25 October 1850], CSRM, 2015.47.105.8.

⁵¹ WHH to Tupper, 22 October 1850, in Coombs, *Pre-Raphaelite Friendship*, 30–31.

⁵² WHH to Tupper, 27 October 1850, in Coombs, *Pre-Raphaelite Friendship*, 33.

⁵³ Stephens, 'Early Italian Art', *Germ*, 63.

Hearnden] feeds us jollily, hot dinners every day and pies, meat for breakfast. I paint in the wash-house place and enjoy all the eight winds of [?] and a prime through draft into the bargain; at dinner I carve and am master of that noble Art, thinking nothing of a piece of round-of-beef or a shoulder of mutton, loin of pork, fillet of veal, leg of pork, [...] I pour out at breakfast and tea, and am major domo in general in consequence of being always at home. [...] I have got a fine subject for another picture for which I shall make a design while here.⁵⁴

This was a happy time for Stephens, surrounded by his friends and working with them under the same principles of painting faithfully from nature.

Stephens returned to London on 10 November, leaving Rossetti and Hunt still at Sevenoaks.⁵⁵

On 2 December he called on W. M. Rossetti, who noted that ‘he has painted a little on his picture since getting back’.⁵⁶ Three months later, when he unveiled *The Proposal* at a PRB gathering on 9 March 1851, the head and torso of Griselda were still unpainted; evidently Stephens had been unable to find a model as yet, and he doubted if he could finish it.⁵⁷ Robert Upstone has suggested Elizabeth Siddall as the sitter on account of her downturned eyes and reddish hair, although this cannot be confirmed.⁵⁸ While the heads of Walter and Janicula are finely realised to the point of being portraits of specific individuals, Griselda’s facial features appear doll-like and disproportioned. This can be explained by the fact that Stephens rushed this final part of the painting in order to submit it to the RA exhibition that opened in early May.

Stephens’s work on D. G. Rossetti’s *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* only two months earlier in December 1849 (Fig. 23), as discussed in Chapter 2, appears to have influenced the composition of his own painting, with its sloping perspective, juxtaposition of standing and seated figures and psychological air of reluctance as Griselda recoils from the Marquis’s touch. Stephens was also looking at Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434; Fig. 31), which had been purchased by the National Gallery in 1842 and which had a significant impact on the PRB. The perspective recession, the domestic interior painted with a minute exactitude, and the surrounding objects which have a tangible presence within the room, are all visual responses to van Eyck. Griselda’s bowed head and her dress falling in crisply painted folds to the floor also seem a reversed mirror image of the woman in the van Eyck. Stephens’s intimate knowledge of

⁵⁴ FGS to Dorothy Mary Stephens, 30 October 1850, CSRM, 2015.47.105.22.

⁵⁵ *PRBJ*, 82 (13 November 1850): ‘Stephens returned on Sunday’. ‘About Sevenoaks, I find it was on the 14th Oct. 1850, I went there and took the lodgings where we lived. We returned on the 10th November’; FGS to WMR, 11 November 1889, ADC, Box 14, Folder 7.

⁵⁶ *PRBJ*, 84 (2 December 1850).

⁵⁷ *PRBJ*, 89–90.

⁵⁸ Upstone, *Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, 40.

the painting is expressed in his short story, 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror', probably written in the spring of 1850 and eventually published six years later, and which will be closely examined in Chapter 6.

In addition, Stephens was apparently cognisant of an early Italian painting which had been acquired by the National Gallery in 1848, and which scholars have identified as another important influence on the young Pre-Raphaelites: Lorenzo Monaco's *San Benedetto Altarpiece* (then attributed to Taddeo Gaddi; Fig. 32), which was visually quoted by D. G. Rossetti and Millais in their exhibited paintings of 1849, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and *Isabella* (Fig. 34).⁵⁹ Like them, Stephens appears to have responded to the two saints dressed in white and yellow and facing each other at right angles in the foreground when painting the Marquis and Griselda: the former seated sidelong to the picture plane in sharply delineated profile; the latter standing beside him with her head slightly lowered. As Prettejohn has indicated, Rossetti and Millais incorporated the 'right-angle juxtaposition' of the two saints into their own paintings for different narrative purposes: the 'Virgin's obedience to her mother's teaching' in *The Girlhood*, and the 'complexity of the social interactions' in *Isabella*.⁶⁰ Stephens also deploys this right-angle orientation in *The Proposal* in order to suggest the stark social divide between Griselda on the left and the marquis Walter on the right.

Together with these cues from actual pre-Raphaelite works of art, *The Proposal* engages with the same social concerns as other paintings produced by the PRB at this time and demonstrates Stephens's sensitivity to matters of 'ethical morality'. Indeed, Hunt's letter to Tupper suggests that Stephens was known among the group for holding these views. Scholars have noted the PRB's selection of modern-life subjects at this time which examined the conflicted relationships between men and women in 'disparate stations in life', such as Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (1853–4) and D. G. Rossetti's *Found* (1853).⁶¹ The marquis Walter is presented as a physically ineffectual aristocrat who has been indulgently drinking wine and must lean on his sword for support. This is at variance with Chaucer's description of Walter as 'handsome and young and strong' with 'high honour and a gentle courtesy'; the frailty of Stephens's

⁵⁹ Malcolm Warner, 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 3–5. See also Barringer, Rosenfeld and Smith, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 48. Like the *Arnolfini Portrait*, Stephens would have seen the *San Benedetto Altarpiece* in the exhibition rooms adjacent to the RA Schools in Trafalgar Square.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 105–6.

⁶¹ Barringer, Rosenfeld and Smith, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 92. DGR's *Found* exists in several versions as drawings and two unfinished oil paintings, but the earliest study for the composition is dated 1853 (British Museum).

Marquis is the result of a life of ‘sensuality’, wealth and idleness, rather than vigorous, ‘manly’ pursuits. His blood-red tights recall the red finery worn by the cold-hearted squire’s son in Millais’s *The Woodman’s Daughter* (Fig. 33), painted simultaneously in 1850–1. Millais’s *Isabella* of 1848–9 (Fig. 34), based upon Keats’s 1818 poem ‘Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil’, explores similar class issues, in this case a romantic relationship between a high-born woman, Isabella, and a man of lowlier status, Lorenzo, and the disapproval of Isabella’s brothers which ultimately leads to Lorenzo’s murder. Both Keats and Millais critique the cruelty of the masculine upper classes towards their social inferiors. Following Millais’s lead, Stephens situates his scene beside a dinner table, and it is possible to see in the pose of Walter an echo of Millais’s *Isabella*, who is also seated in profile sidelong to the picture plane.

Millais’s *The Woodman’s Daughter* was painted almost simultaneously in 1850–1, and also examines the cruelties inflicted upon a working-class woman by an upper-class man – disturbingly foreshadowed, in Millais’s case, by children. The subject is drawn from Coventry Patmore’s tragic poem ‘The Woodman’s Daughter’ (1844). Stephens was informed of Millais’s progress on the picture by James Wyatt Jr. on 5 June 1850: ‘Millais is hard at work, painting the background of his picture from nature in Wytham wood, not more than two miles from me’.⁶² Many years later, Stephens told Arthur Hughes that he was ‘with Millais in the country when painting “The Woodman’s Daughter”’.⁶³ Therefore, both Millais and Stephens painted their canvases in real, distinct locations – Wytham Woods near Oxford, the washroom of Mrs Hearnden’s at Sevenoaks – to achieve the highest degree of realism for their historical subjects. *The Woodman’s Daughter* foreshadows the seduction of the eponymous girl, Maud, by the son of the local squire: leaning back against a tree, he offers her a handful of ripe strawberries, emblematic of lust. Her open, smiling expression as she reaches for the fruit seems tragically naïve when compared with the boy’s deadpan countenance. Contemporary viewers were disturbed by Millais’s painting when it was shown at the RA in 1851, and unlike the other works by the artist in the same exhibition – *Mariana* and *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* – *The Woodman’s Daughter* went unsold.

Social rank is contrasted through the children’s clothing in *The Woodman’s Daughter*.

Opposite Maud’s faded pinafore and scuffed, muddied boots that harmonise with the surrounding

⁶² James Wyatt Jr. to FGS, 5 June 1850, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 177–78.

⁶³ Quoted in Millais, *Life and Letters*, 1:111.

woodland, the boy's red velvet tunic and pristine white stockings appear unnatural against the green grass and disrupt the colour harmonies of Millais's composition. His neat, thin shoes, too, are feeble footwear for a hard day's work among the trees, thereby denoting his upper-class idleness (he has only visited the woods for a short time, and will soon return to the comforts of the family manor). Behind the children, to the left, Maud's father (named Gerald in Patmore's poem) bends forward whilst swinging an axe to begin cutting a tree. In a study for the painting, Millais shows Gerald turning to gaze at the children with a disturbing grimace (Fig. 35). This was altered in the final painting, in which he does not look back at the children. That Gerald pays no attention to his daughter's actions foreshadows his indifference towards her when she needs him most:

Once Maud came weeping back. 'Poor child!'
 Was all her father said:
 And he would steady his old hand
 Upon her hapless head,
 And think of her as tranquilly
 As if the child were dead.

Her tears hint that she has been sexually assaulted by the squire's son, but having strayed from innocence, even if unwillingly, she is essentially 'dead' to her father's affections.

Similarly, Stephens places Griselda in close proximity to the two men in her life: her future husband and her father. Walter will take over Janicula's role as the young woman's protector and ruler; both men gaze at her, willing her to accept the Marquis's marriage proposal that would elevate her to a new life of luxury: 'Griselda was astounded / To see so great a guest in such a place, / She was not used to being so surrounded / By noble visitors. How pale her face . . .'⁶⁴ Should she accept Walter's proposal, it must be under the condition of absolute obedience to her husband:

'I warn you to be ready to obey
 My lightest whim and pleasure; you must show
 A willing heart, ungrudging night or day,
 Whether I please to offer joy or woe.
 When I say "Yes" you never shall say "No"
 Either by word or frowning a defiance.
 Swear this and I will swear to our alliance.'⁶⁵

Like the father in Patmore's poem, Janicula shows little consideration for what his daughter might feel about her involvement with a man. Earlier in *The Clerk's Tale*, when Walter rides up to their cottage and asks to marry Griselda, Janicula, although he blushes and quakes, meekly consents

⁶⁴ Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, 330.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 330.

without a second thought: ““Let me not hinder; I am bound to do, / My dear, dear master, what best pleases you.””⁶⁶ In Stephens’s painting he stares vacantly, even wistfully on, his head propped on his hand, perhaps imagining his daughter’s rise in social status. As in *Morte d’Arthur*, the characters’ hands articulate the thematic content of the painting. Just as the squire’s son in *The Woodman’s Daughter* seduces Maud with fruit offered in his outstretched palm (his other hand holds a long stick like a riding crop, hinting at his crueller side), the Marquis, grasping Griselda’s hand against her will, beseeches her to give away her freedom and happiness for his benefit, while his other hand grips his sword, anticipating future violence.

In Chaucer’s poem Griselda assents unthinkingly, but Stephens introduces an air of ambivalence in his female protagonist. Far from being a straightforward illustration of Chaucer’s text, *The Proposal* investigates the psychology of a young woman faced with a life-changing decision. The artist maps out Griselda’s feelings of doubt iconographically, in Pre-Raphaelite fashion, through the objects in the room and the placement of each character within the interior space. Griselda stands with her back to the open doorway, holding her hat behind her, as if hiding it from Walter’s view. The stone step below the door, leading to a small path, has been worn down over the years, evoking all the times she has passed over it as a young girl. Her torso is framed by the open casement with a view of the sky, and her plain, dark-brown dress echoes the autumn landscape outside. All these elements convey her internal desire to be outdoors and free; in marrying Walter she sacrifices the freedom of her girlhood and submits to his will.

The other half of the canvas, given over to the male characters, is less open and more claustrophobic. The closed door in the corner behind Janicula, symmetrically opposite the outside door, leads upstairs, probably to the bedroom, hinting at Griselda’s loss of innocence on her wedding night. The casement framing Walter’s head is shut, and his red and black garments connect him with the tiled floor and the closed door. Stephens has therefore inverted the traditional associations of masculinity as external and active and femininity as interior and domestic; it is Griselda who stands tall and upright and yearns to leave the cottage, while the men remain seated and detain her inside. This situation is enacted by the two chickens at Griselda’s feet, as the brown rooster raises his spiky

⁶⁶ Ibid., 329.

foot to subdue the white hen cowering before him. Stephens has also completely reversed Rigaud's mawkish portrayal of the prospective couple (Fig. 29) that places Griselda in a passive kneeling position at the Marquis's feet and makes her complicit with his demands.

Rossetti's *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* and Millais's *Isabella* and *The Woodman's Daughter* were all painted either before or concomitantly with *The Proposal*. Did Stephens's painting have any influence on later works by the Pre-Raphaelite artists? Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (Fig. 36), which was commenced about two years later in 1853, shares similar characteristics. The dark, claustrophobic interior, the open window suggesting the possibility of freedom for the female protagonist, and the animals in the left foreground as types of the human characters, are all quoted to some extent in Hunt's painting which relocates them to a modern setting. Both artists were influenced by the *Arnolfini Portrait* in realising the subject of a lower-class woman being entrapped by her upper-class suitor.⁶⁷ The frank sexuality and underlying Christian message of *The Awakening Conscience* strike a different note; Stephens's painting is decidedly more chaste and is rooted in English literature rather than scriptural teachings (Hunt's picture frame is inscribed with a quotation from Proverbs). Nevertheless, Hunt's closeness with Stephens when the latter was working on *The Proposal*, and the lively exchanging of ideas between the two artists in the early 1850s, make the transference of themes and visual motifs to Hunt's painting a distinct possibility. The rooster raising its foot to subdue the cowering white hen corresponds with the cat swiping the trapped bird on the floor, while both paintings feature a seated male figure with a female standing upright beside them. Both Stephens's *Griselda* and Hunt's *Kept Woman* are intended to elicit sympathy from viewers, prompting us to contemplate their lowly position within the social hierarchy and their subjugation at the hands of men from a higher class.

If the RA had accepted *The Proposal* when Stephens submitted it in 1851, the picture would have appeared alongside *The Woodman's Daughter* and the close visual and thematic relationship between the two would have been recognised. Viewers would not have known that Stephens created it, however: he sent it – as had become his habit – under a pseudonym, 'Brown'.⁶⁸ The painting bears

⁶⁷ Alison Smith in Smith, *Reflections*, 43, describes WHH's painting as 'probably the most complex and influential of all the Pre-Raphaelite engagements with the *Arnolfini Portrait*'; the painting was included in the 2017 National Gallery exhibition *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites*.

⁶⁸ 'Stephens's *Griselda* was sent – in the name, as he now informs us, of "Brown" – but does not make its

his monogram in the bottom-right corner, identical to those on *Morte d'Arthur* and his later painting *Mother and Child*, but this may have been added at a later date. The young artist had worked hard on *The Proposal* for over a year and still had not exhibited any of his works, so the rejection must have been deeply felt, particularly as he already lacked confidence in his abilities.

Dethe and the Riotours and its Relation to Other Pre-Raphaelite Drawings

The Proposal was not Stephens's only design from Chaucer. *The Pardoner's Tale* provided the subject for a large pen and ink drawing titled *Dethe and the Riotours* – the largest work by Stephens in that medium to have survived (Fig. 5). Although the *PRB Journal* mentions a sketch he made of 'the Revellers meeting Death' in February 1850 (at the same time as his *Griselda* designs), David Brown has convincingly argued that Stephens began working on a 'Death and the Riotours' drawing in the autumn of 1848.⁶⁹ This corresponds with the inscription on the picture itself, which states that it was 'Composed 1848 / Drawn 1852', before being presented to 'Dante G. Rossetti from his P.R.B^r / F.G.S.'. Other inscriptions include Stephens's signature and monogram and the title 'DETHER and the RIOTOURS / Chaucer v. 12575, Pardoner's Tale'. On the reverse of the large sheet, Stephens copied out a long extract from the relevant passage in *The Pardoner's Tale* which his drawing illustrates, written in the original Middle English, and signed it with the date '1st July 1853'. The following year, in 1854, Stephens submitted the picture to the Folio, an informal sketching club instigated by D. G. Rossetti. Brown has noted that the drawing clearly occupied Stephens for 'a considerable period, reaching final completion at a convenient moment for inclusion in the Folio' in 1854, at which time it was acquired by Rossetti.⁷⁰

A previously unknown sheet of sketches by Stephens was discovered by myself in the collection of the Maas Gallery in London.⁷¹ They are small studies for *Dethe and the Riotours* (these

appearance'; *PRBJ*, 91 (2 May 1851). Whether or not he intended to evoke Madox Brown in this name choice is uncertain.

⁶⁹ *PRBJ*, 53 (9 February 1850); David Brown, 'Pre-Raphaelite Drawings in the Bryson Bequest', *Master Drawings* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 287–93.

⁷⁰ Brown, 'Pre-Raphaelite Drawings', 288.

⁷¹ I discovered the sheet during a visit to the Maas Gallery on 20 October 2017, tucked inside Stephens's personal copy of his 1860 pamphlet, *William Holman Hunt and His Works*. Although this particular copy of the pamphlet has been consulted by scholars including Jeremy Maas and Judith Bronkhurst, the sketches by Stephens went unrecorded until now.

words are even inscribed in Stephens's hand on one part of the sheet), and show the artist determining the composition and postures of the figures (Figs. 37–38). The sheet itself appears to be a blank order form for transporting goods, rather than proper artist's paper, implying that the artist quickly jotted down his ideas for the picture on the first material that came to hand.⁷² It is reasonable to assume that these sketches were made in 1848. In a satirical play written in 1854, entitled *Miching Mallecho – It Means Mischief*, D. G. Rossetti wrote a dialogue between Millais and Stephens:

Mil. Going to put your design in the Folio?

Steph. Put one in.

Mil. What is it?

Steph. 'Death and the Riotours' from Chaucer.

Mil. O of course, I remember you beginning that when I painted *Isabella*.

Steph. Yes.⁷³

Millais began *Isabella* at the end of October 1848, so Stephens's sketches were probably done earlier in the summer when Millais made his first design for his painting.⁷⁴ Hunt also recalled that Stephens produced three 'mediaeval' designs prior to the autumn of 1848, one of which was likely to have been the Chaucer subject.⁷⁵ At that time, the young artists were preoccupied with literary subjects with a medieval setting, such as Millais's and Hunt's designs from Keats's 'Isabella' and D. G. Rossetti's illustrations of Goethe's *Faust* and Coleridge's 'Genevieve'. That Stephens chose an authentic source from the fourteenth century demonstrates his developing antiquarian interests in 1848.

The Pardoner's Tale takes place in medieval Flanders. Three young men – the 'riotours' of Stephens's title – have spent their days drinking, gambling and blaspheming in the local taverns. One day they hear about the murder of one of their friends and decide to avenge him by setting out to find and kill Death. On their journey, they meet a mysterious old man, who tells them that he has asked Death to take his life, without success. He tells the rioters that they can find Death under a nearby oak tree. When the men get there, they find 'eight bushels' of golden florins on the ground. Through various means, the rioters proceed to murder one another by dagger and by poison for possession of the gold; in an ironic twist, they end up finding Death after all.

This tale was not popular with Victorian artists – at least, not nearly as popular as that of

⁷² This is reminiscent of WHH's first compositional design for *The Light of the World*, which was done hurriedly on the back of an envelope in 1851 (now in the Ashmolean Museum, WA1977.61).

⁷³ DGR to William Allingham, *CDGR*, 1:371.

⁷⁴ John Everett Millais, *Study for 'Isabella'*, 1848. Pen and ink on paper, 20.1 x 29.2 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 2, note 9.

Griselda from *The Clerk's Tale*. Although it carries a strong moral message regarding the dangers of greed and the importance of friendship and comradeship over personal gain, its violent narrative and macabre ending are devoid of any picturesque or romantic episodes. Those who did try their hand at depicting it focused, like Stephens, on the rioters' encounter with the old man around which the tale pivots. John Hamilton Mortimer's engraving of *Three Gamblers and Time*, from a series of illustrations to *The Canterbury Tales* published in 1787, presents a standard rustic scene that doubles as a convenient allegory for youthful folly juxtaposed with old age (Fig. 39). Stephens was apparently familiar with this print and adapted it for his own picture. The figures of the rioters in the early sketches (Figs. 37, 38) wear similar cavalier-style outfits from the seventeenth century, with feathered caps and doublet and hose. These were altered in the finished drawing to be authentically medieval, complete with exaggeratedly pointed shoes. Additionally, the rioter on the far right of Mortimer's picture, standing with his back to the viewer and one hand cocked on his hip, is reversed in the Ashmolean drawing. The early sketches show that Stephens retained the overall composition of his figures – two of the rioters huddled together on the left, the third rioter in the middle, and the old man on the right – in the final picture.

The tension between the rioters and the old man is palpable, heightened by the negative space between them and articulated through their attitudes. Stephens may have altered the relaxed, debonair positions of the legs of the two left figures in his first sketches (Fig. 37) after seeing Millais's drawing *The Death of Romeo and Juliet* of 1848 (Fig. 40), which features a similar group of figures on the far left of the composition with angular postures, crisply delineated clothing and obscured faces. The two rioters appear tense and alert in the Ashmolean drawing; one of them points confrontationally towards the old man. The front-facing rioter is locked into a stiff, defensive position; his left fist is clenched, his right hand tugs nervously at his belt and his head is sunk into his shoulders in a submissive gesture. His mouth is open, either in speech or in surprise. His two companions huddle together expectantly, their backs to the picture plane. Unlike the monkish attire worn by the old man in the Mortimer engraving, Stephens's old man is dressed in a plain, shapeless garment with a long shawl covering his head, which evokes a winding sheet used to enwrap a corpse. Only the man's face is visible; in this Stephens might be evoking Nicholas Stone's remarkable funeral effigy of John Donne

in St Paul's Cathedral (1631), which portrays the deceased poet enveloped in a burial shroud.⁷⁶ From the original sketches it is evident that he originally intended to present the man with an aged, wizened face in line with Chaucer's poem, but he altered it to a more youthful, ambiguous face. The man's bare feet and spindly walking stick add to his odd, spiky appearance.

Colin Cruise has suggested that *Dethe and the Riotours* displays the influence of Carlo Lasinio's engravings of frescoes from the Campo Santo at Pisa from the 1820s and 1830s, long cited as a source of inspiration for the early PRB.⁷⁷ However, Stephens's picture bears closer comparison with other Pre-Raphaelite drawings from 1848. Its angular, spiky figures and hard-edged outline style are akin to Rossetti's *Genevieve*, Hunt's *Lorenzo at his Desk in the Workhouse* and, by Millais, *Lovers by a Rosebush* and the *Death of Romeo and Juliet* already mentioned, all illustrations of English literature (Coleridge, Keats, Shakespeare). Rather than being preparatory studies for paintings, the PRB intended these graphic works to be standalone compositions in their own right, to be circulated amongst themselves for private consumption rather than public exhibition.

Stephens's drawing does depart significantly from these examples in its extensive outdoor setting. The three rioters and the old man are arranged against a backdrop of rolling English countryside devoid of architectural distractions. Near them is a stile, which indicates Stephens's faithfulness to Chaucer's text: 'When they had not gone fully half a mile, / Just as they were about to cross a stile, / They came upon a very poor old man, / Who humbly greeted them'.⁷⁸ A row of poplar trees recedes into the distance from the right, leading to a small cliff that in turn introduces a hill on the left. (James Collinson used a similar outdoor composition, including the poplar trees, in his etching for the *Germ* in 1850, *The Child Jesus*, illustrating his poem of the same title (Fig. 41).) These background elements are described in pure outline, with shading used sparingly on the trees and hedges; together these indicate a landscape exposed to bright midday sunlight. The harsh, overhead lighting continues into the foreground, as the two huddled rioters cast a dense, amorphous shadow across their third companion and onto the grass. Passages of finely observed detail enliven the scene,

⁷⁶ Wenceslaus Hollar's 1658 etching of this monument may have been known to Stephens.

⁷⁷ Colin Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 46. Carlo Lasinio's engravings were published in *Pittura a fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa* (1828) and first cited by Hunt as having a significant impact on the PRB in 1888.

⁷⁸ Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, 251.

such as the shadow cast by the dagger hanging around the neck of the forward-facing rioter. Only two of the men are armed, foreshadowing later events in the tale, when two of the rioters conspire to stab their friend.

That Stephens copied out an extract from *The Pardoner's Tale* onto the reverse establishes a direct dialogue between text and image, superimposing one over the other and encouraging a comparison between the two – a common feature of the Pre-Raphaelites' literary drawings. The design of *Hesterna Rosa* which D. G. Rossetti gave to Stephens carries a quotation from Sir Henry Taylor's historical play, *Philip van Artevelde* (1834), which inspired it. The *Hesterna Rosa* drawing bears a dedication stating that they were 'composed. 1850. drawn, and given to his P.R. Brother Frederic G. Stephens. 1853'. Stephens later stated in a letter to W. M. Rossetti that *Hesterna Rosa* 'was designed and drawn in 1849, given to me early in 1850, and only worked upon (to no important extent) in 1853'; at which time, he explained in another letter, Dante Gabriel 'borrowed it [...] and returned it with no alteration I can detect except the shape of the legs of the stool in the front'.⁷⁹ Rossetti gave Stephens another drawing, *Taurello's First Sight of Fortune*, illustrating Robert Browning's narrative poem *Sordello* (1840), in 1849. These small pictures, exchanged between one another, served as tokens of friendship, strengthening particular ties within the Brotherhood.

Further similarities can be found between Stephens's *Dethe and the Riotours* and Elizabeth Siddall's *Pippa Passes* and *Lovers Listening to Music* (both 1854; Figs. 42, 43), all of which were part of the same bequest by John Bryson to the Ashmolean in 1977. Brown supposes that Siddall could have seen Stephens's drawing when it came to D. G. Rossetti in 1854.⁸⁰ *Pippa Passes* illustrates Robert Browning's poem of the same title (published 1841), while the subject of the *Lovers* appears to be Siddall's own invention. *Pippa Passes*, in particular, is a direct mirror of Stephens's composition, foregrounding an encounter between a single figure on the left and a group of three figures on the right. The geese pecking at the branch in Pippa's hand in the lower left corner counterbalance the dog on the right of Stephens's drawing – naturalistic details at the margins which serve to enliven the scene. Siddall has concentrated the heaviest shading on the folds of Pippa's dress

⁷⁹ FGS to WMR, 3 November 1889, ADC, Folder Box 14, Folder 8; FGS to WMR, incomplete draft of letter, 5 June 1906, FGSP, MS. Don. c. 76, ff. 206–208.

⁸⁰ Brown, 'Pre-Raphaelite Drawings', 289.

and her shadow, which is cast by bright sunlight onto the loose women who call to her from the steps. The eye is then drawn along the receding diagonal of the tree-lined wall to the small cityscape in the left background, rendered using a lighter pen. A similar configuration of sharply realised figures against a more faintly sketched background recurs in *Lovers Listening to Music*, which features the same undulating hills and hedges as *Dethe and the Riotours*.

Stephens's relationship with Siddall did not start well. In late August or early September 1850, he and Hunt tricked the Tupper brothers into believing that Siddall was Hunt's wife; this understandably infuriated Elizabeth, as well as D. G. Rossetti, who forced Hunt to write a letter of apology to John Tupper.⁸¹ The young men's reasons for doing this are not clear, although it is typical of the PRB's anarchic, boyish sense of humour. The ill feeling this inspired may eventually have resolved itself. Violet Hunt presented a fanciful anecdote of Stephens and 'Lizzy' leaning together out of the window of Rossetti's flat in Chatham Place one snowy morning in 1854.⁸² It is significant that when Stephens wrote to Hunt in 1855 about Rossetti's projected marriage to Siddall, he refers to her as 'an artist' – a clear suggestion that he knew her work.⁸³ Moreover, both Stephens and Siddall were favourite models within the group, and occasionally featured in the same paintings. In Hunt's *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (1849–50; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), Stephens appears as one of the pagans crowding in the left background, Siddall as the woman holding a bowl and sponge in the foreground.⁸⁴ When creating *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet* (1852–6; Tate), Ford Madox Brown painted Siddall's hair onto the head of Stephens, who had posed for Christ in 1852.⁸⁵ A decade later, when W. M. Rossetti wrote to inform Stephens of Siddall's death on 11 February 1862 ('Poor Lizzie is dead: you will see about it in the

⁸¹ 'Hunt & Stephens have been playing off a disgraceful hoax on poor Jack Tupper, by passing Miss Siddal upon him as Hunt's wife. The Baron [George Tupper] was included as a victim. As soon as I heard of it, [...] I made the Mad [Hunt] write a note of apology at once to Jack'; DGR to WMR, 3 September 1850, in *CDGR*, 1:151. See Coombs, *Pre-Raphaelite Friendship*, 29, for Hunt's undated letter of apology to John Tupper: 'Stephens joins with me in contrition as he did in the impromptu farce'.

⁸² Hunt, *Wife of Rossetti*, 68, which continues: 'Stephens had said suddenly, "There goes Deverell!" It was the very moment he [Deverell] died alone in the room the nurse away and Millais waiting in the parlour'.

⁸³ 'There was a whisper about that both the Rossettis were soon to be married. G[abriel] to a young lady, an artist, you will guess whom'; FGS to WHH, 14 November 1855, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2. DGR and Siddall did not marry until 1860.

⁸⁴ '[Hunt has] painted Stephens's head for a savage outside, with various others'; *PRBJ*, 61 (6 March 1850).

⁸⁵ 'The hair and the face in part were painted from Miss Siddal, with the guidance also of a sitting from F. G. Stephens'; *PR&PRB*, 1:319. A sketch of Stephens's head for *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet*, dated 1852, is now in the Tate.

papers unfortunately – laudanum’), Stephens responded sympathetically and offered his help to the Rossettis after the funeral.⁸⁶ ‘If I could command your friendly offices in any way’, William Michael wrote, ‘be sure I should not hesitate to do so, being sure that it would be a satisfaction to you as well as us’.⁸⁷

A key theme of the past two chapters is the prominence of literary subjects in Stephens’s artworks between 1848 and 1851. Literature was central to his work because he was also beginning to experiment creatively with writing – with the ‘Arthur’ poem discussed in Chapter 2, but also other poems, one of which will be analysed in the next chapter. He was also beginning to enter the field of art criticism which would govern the course of his future career. His literary experiments from this same period will therefore be examined in the next chapter.

⁸⁶ WMR to FGS, undated (11 February 1862), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, f. 62.

⁸⁷ WMR to FGS, 15 February 1862, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, ff. 63–64.

Chapter 4: Poetry and Early Criticism

Stephens's poetry and early criticism is important not only because it has been frequently or even entirely overlooked by scholars, but also because it demonstrates the active role Stephens played as an exponent of Pre-Raphaelite ideals in the early 1850s, both in print and in private. Chapter 2 discussed Stephens's earliest literary endeavour, the unfinished 'Arthur' poem of 1849. This chapter will consider another poem by him which I have discovered, which provides a new insight into the PRB's admiration for one of their greatest literary heroes, John Keats, whose poems provided subjects for some of their earliest pictures. Like 'Arthur', this text has never been published and is presented here for the first time (see Appendix 3, No. 6); it too was apparently never circulated outside the PRB circle. Some of Stephens's critical texts discussed in this chapter are familiar in Pre-Raphaelite studies: the two essays which he wrote for the *Germ* magazine of 1850, 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art' and 'Modern Giants'. These are arguably Stephens's best-known literary works. They have been widely anthologised and are often quoted by scholars because of their clear explication of Pre-Raphaelite ideas regarding both revivalism and the importance of modern-life subjects. Although the arguments and theories put forward in these essays are known to scholars, I will present new findings about the art historical and literary sources which inspired Stephens.

Plans for the Pre-Raphaelites' expansion into print were underway by August 1849. On the 13th, the *PRB Journal* first mentioned 'a project for a monthly 6d. magazine for which 4 or 5 of us would write, and one make an etching each subscribing a guinea and thus becoming a proprietor'.¹ A meeting between Woolner and the Rossetti brothers the next day resulted in a possible title for 'our contemplated magazine [...] "Monthly Thoughts in literature, poetry and art" with a sonnet on the wrapper'.² Fredeman has charted the chronology of what would become the PRB's central literary organ, from the publication of its first issue on 1 January 1850, to the magazine's eventual demise after only four numbers in July 1850.³ Initially titled *The Germ: Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* and changed to *Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature Conducted*

¹ *PRBJ*, 10 (13 August 1849).

² *Ibid.*, 11 (14 August 1849).

³ *Ibid.*, 117–20 (Appendix 5: 'Chronology of *The Germ*').

Principally by Artists for the remaining two issues, it contains Stephens's first published prose works. 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art', in the second issue, was written under the pseudonym John Seward, while for 'Modern Giants', in the fourth number, Stephens unusually adopted the female name Laura Savage. These two essays were instrumental in outlining Pre-Raphaelitism's ideals and motives in a bold, polemical fashion. W. M. Rossetti later wrote that the first essay was 'a direct outcome of the Præraphaelite movement'.⁴

Stephens's contributions to the *Germ* led to him taking over W. M. Rossetti's role as an art critic for *The Critic*, a periodical on literary, artistic and scientific subjects. His first article was a review of the winter exhibition of the Old Society of Painters in Water Colours on 15 January 1851, and he kept the post until around July 1853.⁵ His time with the *Critic* was fraught with clashes with its editor, Edward William Cox, who felt he was 'a little too severe' in his critical judgements.⁶ Stephens revived his 'Laura Savage' pseudonym when reviewing the RA exhibition of 1851. He described paintings by Millais, Hunt, Madox Brown and Charles Allston Collins, and responded to Ruskin's letters to the *Times*, which were ostensibly written in defence of the young PRBs.⁷ These early articles in the *Critic* marked the first time that Stephens's writing reached a wider public audience, in a professional publication outside the home-grown, carefully mediated environment of the *Germ*.

Stephens's Keats Poem

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, the discovery of several original poem manuscripts by Stephens, dating from the early years of the PRB, confirms that all seven members of the Brotherhood wrote poems. Even those PRBs who are not generally thought of as writers tried their hand at composition: the *PRB Journal* in 1849 records Millais at work on a lengthy narrative poem referred to as the 'Castle-moat', which he hoped to include in the *Germ*'s fifth issue.⁸ Two of Stephens's elegies, 'Oh!

⁴ *Germ*, 21.

⁵ On 22 July 1853, FGS wrote to WHH: 'I am coming to a crisis with the Critic and shall shortly, I think, either be paid or decline further writing'; UBC, WHHF, Folder 1-2.

⁶ Edward William Cox to WMR, 14 March 1851, quoted in *PRBJ*, 245, note 7.8.

⁷ John Ruskin, 'The Pre-Raffaelites', *Times* (13 May 1851): 8-9; 'The Pre-Raphaelite Artists', *Times* (30 May 1851): 8-9.

⁸ *PRBJ*, 3 (15 and 17 May 1849), 5 (23 May) and 24 (11 November 1849). Millais's poem has not survived. Millais, *Life and Letters*, 1:67-68, describes it as a short story rather than a poem, and outlines its plot.

weariness falls the lapsing time' and 'A Burial place for me', were probably also intended for the *Germ*.⁹ Ultimately, one poem by James Collinson, three by D. G. Rossetti, four by Woolner and seven by W. M. Rossetti appeared in the periodical's four issues.¹⁰ Poems by non-members Christina Rossetti (under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyn), John Lucas Tupper, Coventry Patmore, John Orchard, Madox Brown and Major Robert Calder Campbell, were also included.

However, as Fredeman observes, the Pre-Raphaelites' interest in poetry was not 'limited to the serious: the brothers Rossetti engaged in *bouts-rimés* composition, and both indulged themselves with the writing of parodies and doggerel verse-letters'.¹¹ Letters written in verse by Hunt to Stephens and William Smith Williams are also purely informal, comic productions.¹² Just as the Brothers gave one another drawings and portraits as gifts with personalised inscriptions, so too did they pass around poems for private consumption, with themselves as subjects. In Fredeman's opinion, these verses 'are the literary counterparts [of] the many caricatures and self-portraits that abounded during the heyday of the Brotherhood'.¹³ However, all of Stephens's surviving poems are markedly solemn.

Aside from 'Arthur', Stephens's most important poem in terms of its context in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is the unfinished sonnet 'To a Cast from the Head of Keats' (Appendix 3, No. 6; Fig. 44), probably composed in November 1849 or shortly after. It places us at the centre of a gathering of Pre-Raphaelites around the title object, mourning the dead poet with an almost religious fervour. Keats had been named as one of the Brotherhood's 'Immortals' in 1848, with two stars beside his name, and they continued to venerate him as a group. In January 1851, W. M. Rossetti reminded Stephens 'that St. Agnes' Eve, Friday, is a P.R.B. night at your house. To the rest I have written, according to the vows'.¹⁴

Stephens's vivid, emotive rendering of the scene suggests that the cast was a real, material

⁹ Appendix 3, Nos. 7–9.

¹⁰ These were: JC's 'The Child Jesus' (*Germ* 2); DGR's 'The Blessed Damozel' (*Germ* 2), 'Carillon' and 'From the Cliffs' (*Germ* 3) and 'Sonnets for Pictures' (*Germ* 4); TW's 'My Beautiful Lady' and 'My Lady in Death' (*Germ* 1), 'O When and Where' (*Germ* 2) and 'Emblems' (*Germ* 3); WMR's 'The First Season' (*Germ* 1), 'Fancies at Leisure' (*Germ* 2), 'Cordelia' and 'Fancies at Leisure' (*Germ* 3), 'To the Castle Ramparts', "'Jesus Wept'" and 'The Evil under the Sun' (*Germ* 4).

¹¹ *PRBJ*, 121 (Appendix 6: 'Poems on the P.R.B.').

¹² Three of these verse letters by WHH are preserved in the South African National Gallery: one to William Smith Williams in August 1848, and two to FGS in September and December 1848; all three have been transcribed by Jerome McGann for the online Rossetti Archive.

¹³ *PRBJ*, 121.

¹⁴ WMR to FGS, undated (January 1851), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, ff. 23–24. Published in Peattie, *Selected Letters*, 20, in which Peattie dates the letter 18 January 1851; however, this was a Saturday.

object. While it is tempting to assume that the PRBs are admiring a death mask in Stephens's poem, it is more likely to have been Benjamin Robert Haydon's life mask of Keats, cast in 1816 when the poet was still living (Fig. 45).¹⁵ In 1860, D. G. Rossetti sent a copy of this mask to Robert Browning in Florence; Rossetti had acquired it from Charles Donovan, a phrenologist who practiced in King William Street.¹⁶ That it was specifically a life mask was noted by Rossetti two years later, and the fact he had first 'met with it by accident'.¹⁷ Although Rossetti does not say when exactly he obtained the original copy, it was almost certainly in 1849 when, according to the *PRB Journal* and Hunt's memoirs, Charles Donovan was closely involved with the Brotherhood, producing 'written characters' for W. M. Rossetti, Woolner, Millais and Hunt in November that year.¹⁸ Hunt later recounted Dante Gabriel's visit to Donovan's practice at that time, 'to see certain busts of those celebrities which he did not know':

'To what particular faculties,' [Rossetti] asked of [Donovan], 'do you attribute the poetic genius of Keats?'

Donovan replied, 'I trace his poetic strain fundamentally to scrofula.'¹⁹

If Dante Gabriel did acquire a copy of Haydon's life mask of Keats 'by accident' from Donovan late in 1849, it would have excited the young men who had, to quote Hunt, been 'brought into intimate relations' by their 'common enthusiasm' for Keats's poetry.²⁰ In the same month, Stephens was writing a political sonnet, and the introduction of the mask into the PRB circle would have caught his attention as a subject for another poem.

Stephens was not the only Pre-Raphaelite to write verses to Keats's memory in the late 1840s.

¹⁵ Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 111–12. Haydon met Keats in 1816 and was the recipient of numerous letters and poems.

¹⁶ '([T]he same one I once had before & broke if you remember). I had a mould taken by [Alexander] Munro before I sent the cast off, so can let you have a copy if you care to be put in mind of mere strawberry-merchants'; DGR to William Allingham, 31 July 1860; *CDGR*, 2:305–7 and note 6.

¹⁷ 'On 9 January 1862, DGR told Charles Eliot Norton that another copy of the mask he had sent to Browning, moulded by Munro, occupied his mantelpiece at 14 Chatham Place – 'a cast *from life* [my emphasis] of the face of Keats [...] I met with it by accident, and got Munro [...] to take a mould of it'; *CDGR*, 2:440 and note 8.

¹⁸ *PRBJ*, 21–24 (1, 2, 6 and 8 November 1849) and 208, note 1.11; *PR&PRB*, 1:257–61. See also Stephanie Grilli, 'Pre-Raphaelitism and Phrenology', in *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, ed. Leslie Parris (London: Tate Gallery, 1984), 49–50.

¹⁹ *PR&PRB*, 1:261. Guille, *Millais*, 2:379, recounts Millais's visit to Donovan's practice, and also describes 'busts of eminent men of every profession' on shelves around the room.

²⁰ *PR&PRB*, 1:107. William Michael Rossetti, *Life of John Keats* (London: Walter Scott, 1887), 127–28, describes Haydon's life mask in detail, comparing it with a sketch Haydon made of Keats in 1816, now in the National Portrait Gallery. The mask which DGR sent to the Brownings in 1860 was sold after the death of their son Robert at Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, London, 8 May 1913, lot 1394, as 'A plaster Death Mask of Keats, on circular base. *This was the Poet's* [Browning's] *and very greatly prized by him*'.

D. G. Rossetti had composed a short ‘Epitaph for Keats’ in 1847, while his sister Christina wrote a sonnet ‘On Keats’ on 18 January 1849 (the date of St Agnes’ Eve), in the same period as Stephens’s poem.²¹ Stephens had first met Christina in 1847, and their friendship was mutual and lifelong; W. M. Rossetti later remarked that she saw Stephens ‘frequently’ in the early days.²² Further admiration for Keats was expressed in a letter from Millais to Hunt in the summer of 1849: ‘I have been reading Byrons [sic] *Don Juan* [...] and do not hesitate to pronounce that it is a common work without the slightest regard or feeling for nature[;] to think of that beast being compared to Keats’.²³ Richard Monckton Milnes’s *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats* (1848) had given the Brotherhood access to newly discovered documents and previously unpublished poems.²⁴ W. M. Rossetti declared in a verse letter to Stephens on 30 June 1849 that he ‘yesterday bought Woolner Keats’ / Letters & Life for seven & six’.²⁵ Writing about Benjamin Robert Haydon for the *Crayon* in 1856, Stephens acknowledged Haydon’s friendship with Keats and quoted Haydon’s declaration that ‘Byron and Shelley were always sophisticated about their verses: Keats was sophisticated about nothing’.²⁶ Haydon is referring to Keats’s ‘unsophisticated’ working-class background, in contrast to Byron and Shelley’s far more privileged upbringing and education. That Stephens emphasises this passage so directly further explains why the ‘Cockney Poet’ held a personal significance for him.

Assuming that Stephens did intend ‘To a Cast from the Head of Keats’ to be a sonnet, it trails off two lines short – he struggled to gather together the loose threads of his verse for a satisfying conclusion. He left it hanging on an awkward sentence which does not scan – ‘Thou smilest away with eye benignant’ – but confidently wrote a title at the top of the sheet. Unlike Keats’s odes written

²¹ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ‘An Epitaph for Keats’, in *The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911), 260; Christina Rossetti, ‘On Keats’, in *New Poems by Christina Rossetti, Hitherto Unpublished or Uncollected*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1896), 22–23.

²² FGS to John Collins Francis, 15 January 1894, Janet Camp Troxell Collection of Rossetti Manuscripts, Princeton University Library, Box 31, Folder 27, in which FGS describes a portrait of CGR by DGR as ‘an absolutely just and fine likeness of her when I first knew her in 1847’. William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1906), 1:75.

²³ JEM to WHH, undated (summer 1849), WHHF, Box 18, Folder 10; the reference in the same letter to JEM painting *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* in Shotover Park near Oxford indicates 1849.

²⁴ WMR mentions Milnes’s book in *PRBJ*, 33 (18 December 1849). It strived ‘to raise the character of Keats in the estimation of those most capable of judging it’; Richard Monckton Milnes, ed., *Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*, 2 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1848), 1:xvi.

²⁵ The full poem is transcribed in Peattie, *Selected Letters*, 4–5.

²⁶ Frederic George Stephens, ‘Some Remarks upon the Life of B. R. Haydon, Historical Painter, Second Article’, *Crayon* 3, no. 5 (May 1856): 134. Haydon’s autobiography, compiled from his diaries and letters, was edited by Tom Taylor and published in 1853, giving FGS access to the passage about Keats quoted above.

retrospectively ‘On’ a Grecian urn, the Elgin Marbles, Chapman’s Homer, and other material, inanimate objects, Stephens’s title speaks directly ‘To’ the mask of Keats as something which is visible to him, part of his reality.

The poem is written in iambic pentameter, with what may be an attempt at an Italian sonnet rhyme scheme (ABBA) in the first four lines, although this structure loosens as the poem progresses and Stephens becomes more impassioned. The manuscript (Fig. 44) provides useful insights into his writing process. At the end of line 2, ‘ray’ is crossed out and replaced with ‘beam’, in order to chime with the alteration in the following line, which changes the clunky phrase ‘Sweetest touches / Of the Harp with gentle will!’ to ‘Short stream / The cavern swallowed soon’. The sibilance of these new lines befits the hushed reverence which the mask of Keats, like a religious icon, inspires in its worshippers, as if they are speaking to it in whispers. In line 8, Stephens replaces a dynamic phrasal verb, ‘sitting round thy pleasant face’, with a more passive alternative, ‘sit around’, which better suggests a sense of stillness and contemplation.

In the first lines, the young men are described as ‘Gazing upon thine eyes although our own / So full of Tears, meets [sic] no return’ (ll. 1–2). In this, Stephens acknowledges the paradox of gazing upon the features of a life mask representing someone now deceased, so that their own collective gaze can never be returned. Haydon’s mask of Keats has closed eyes, as was standard practice during the casting process, thereby creating an ambiguous appearance which led the Brownings to believe, at first, that it was a death mask they had been sent by D. G. Rossetti.²⁷ In a way, a life mask fulfils the Pre-Raphaelite principle of faithfully replicating nature in a visual medium. Even more than a portrait that was sketched, painted, or even photographed, a plaster cast could immaculately preserve an individual’s features at a particular moment in unidealised three dimensions. It was a tactile artefact which could be touched and handled, establishing an intimacy across time between the deceased poet and the living PRBs.

One might be forgiven for thinking that the men are in the presence of the poet himself. Even if Keats’s name is never stated in the verse itself, the opening line of his ‘Endymion’ (1818), ‘A

²⁷ The mask had been made ‘not after death as we supposed, but when [Keats] was alive and well’; Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Isa Blagden, 22 March 1861, quoted in Peter Malone, ‘Keats’s “Posthumous Existence” in Plaster’, *The Keats-Shelley Review* 26, no. 2 (September 2012), 131.

Thing of beauty is a joy for ever', is used as an incantation to summon his spirit (l. 5). By deliberately capitalising 'Thing' as a proper noun, Stephens refers back to the mask itself as a beautiful, tangible artefact. In one of his articles on modern Pre-Raphaelite painting for the *Crayon* in 1856, Stephens once again quoted the first line of *Endymion*, in the same breath asserting that art should be 'a record of something that is worth recording'.²⁸ Haydon's life mask of Keats had done just that, creating a precise record of the poet's facial features in plaster which would never, to quote 'Endymion' further, 'pass into nothingness'. There are further references to Keats's poetry in the next lines: 'Thus shall be thy life and thou for ever / Living, shalt fill deep hearts like ours' (ll. 6–7). This brings to mind 'Ode to a Nightingale', in which Keats declares: 'Thou wast not made for death, immortal Bird!'

Considered as a Victorian poem, Stephens's 'To a Cast' is almost shockingly sacrilegious in its deliberate deification of Keats:

And we have for thy glory done good things
Have bowed before Thee and our Hearts always
Are raised to tears not for thy fate (ll. 9–11).

From the manuscript, it is clear that the capitalisation of 'Thee' was no slip of Stephens's pen. The faintly archaic 'always' at the end of line 10 was a favourite end rhyme for Christina Rossetti. Her untitled 'Song', composed on 26 November 1848, deploys it as a refrain for an echoing effect: 'She sat and sang always / By the green margin of a stream'; 'I sat and wept always / Beneath the moon's most shadowy beam'.²⁹ Meanwhile, the 'good things' mentioned in line 9 of Stephens's poem consisted of artworks such as Millais's *Isabella* (Fig. 34), Hunt's *Flight of Madeline and Porphyro* (1848; Guildhall Art Gallery, London), D. G. Rossetti's drawing of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* produced for the Cyclographic Society in 1848. These pictures honoured three different poems by Keats, often in the very public arena of the Royal Academy. Millais's painting was the result of a projected series of collaborative illustrations by himself and Hunt for 'Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil'.³⁰ Given the other Pre-Raphaelite poems dedicated to Keats at this time mentioned earlier, 'To a Cast from the Head of Keats' could be Stephens's contribution to some kind of parallel verse-writing contest on that topic within the circle, although it is not known if this was ever proposed.

²⁸ Frederic George Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms. Third Article. The Modern Pre-Raphaelites', *Crayon* 3, no. 11 (November 1856): 322.

²⁹ Christina Rossetti, 'Song', in *Poetical Works*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1904), 290.

³⁰ *PR&PRB*, 1:

Stephens's declaration that the PRB had for 'done good things' for Keats's 'glory' clearly likens the young men to apostles or brothers tasked with spreading the 'good word' of Christ among the people. It also brings to mind the virtuous 'good works' which Christians were encouraged to perform in everyday life, here of an artistic nature. That Keats's poetry luxuriated in sensual, pagan themes and Grecian mythology – 'Endymion', 'Lamia', 'Hyperion', 'Ode to Psyche' – heightens the possible profanity of Stephens's concept. The life mask is transformed into an object of worship, like the relic venerated by the cult of a medieval saint.

'Italian Art' and 'Modern Giants': Essays for *The Germ*

Stephens was closely involved with the conception and development of the PRB's magazine. By 18 September 1849 he had begun writing 'for the 1st No. an article on early art'.³¹ By 27 September, the table of contents for the first issue had been settled upon, with two important additions: 'Patmore's poem and Stephens's paper on early art'. According to D. G. Rossetti, the latter was 'at present on divers scraps, in a highly chaotic state'.³² That same day, W. M. Rossetti confided in Stephens that the title which several PRBs had proposed for the magazine, the 'P.R.B. Journal', was more suggestive of 'the transactions of a scientific society' – a confusion best avoided.³³ Stephens was also responsible for overseeing the printing of prospectuses advertising the magazine. On 28 September, William Michael asked him to 'take care that my sonnet in the pro[spectus is accurately printed]'.³⁴ A fair copy of a sonnet which William sent to Stephens, titled 'The Dogmatist', may be intended for this.³⁵ Stephens received the prospectuses by 10 October, and distributed them accordingly.³⁶

When Hunt and the Rossetti brothers gathered at Stephens's house to discuss *Germ* matters on 15 December, Stephens raised an objection 'to the publication of his name [...] it was arranged that the question should be submitted to the arbitration of the P.R.B.'. His article bore a vague title, 'The Revival of the Feeling in Early Italian Art', and the manuscript was still being edited: 'There is a

³¹ DGR to WMR, 18 September 1849, in *CDGR*, 1:93.

³² CGR [for DGR] to WMR, 26 September 1849, in *CDGR*, 1:101.

³³ WMR to FGS, 27 September 1849, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, ff. 7–10.

³⁴ *PRBJ*, 18 (28 September 1849).

³⁵ WMR, 'The Dogmatist', unpublished sonnet, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, f. 4.

³⁶ *PRBJ*, 19 (10 October 1850).

gap in it towards the end, as he [Stephens] has cut out several [passages].'³⁷ He no doubt objected to the inclusion of his name because he felt it would impede his future opportunities as a critic. To get around the problem, he devised pseudonyms: John Seward for 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art' (as it came to be titled), and Laura Savage for his second essay in the fourth issue of the *Germ*, 'Modern Giants'.

How Stephens settled on these pseudonyms is not recorded. It is difficult to know how much to read into his first choice, John Seward. Its phonetic meaning, 'seaward', may signify a voyage into new territory. This is evoked at the beginning of Stephens's 'Italian Art', describing the birth and growth of Pre-Raphaelitism as 'a marked attempt to lead the taste of the public into a *new channel* [my emphasis] by producing pure transcripts and faithful studies from nature, instead of conventionalities and feeble reminiscences from the Old Masters'.³⁸ Meanwhile, it was highly unusual for a male writer to adopt a female penname. John Holmes has observed that the name Laura Savage is 'in praise of the savage' and was likely a response to John Orchard's 'A Dialogue on Art' in the same issue of the *Germ*.³⁹ The name Laura, derived from the Latin word for 'laurel', denotes fame and victory. 'Savage' befits the polemical, accusatory tone of 'Modern Giants', which directly challenges contemporary society's complacency in consuming inferior poetry and painting. Furthermore, by utilising male and female personas, Stephens recognised that literary Pre-Raphaelitism was being radically shaped by both sexes – several poems by Christina Rossetti appeared throughout the *Germ*, under her own (female) penname Ellen Alleyn.

Stephens need not have worried about his preference for anonymity. At a meeting on 19 December 1849, at which 'the whole P.R.B., the two Tupperts [John Lucas and George], Deverell, [John] Hancock, and Cave Thomas [...] were present', a proposition was carried 'that our names should not be published'. At the same time, the final title of the magazine was voted on: "'The Seed'" was set aside in favour of "'The Germ'".⁴⁰ Stephens and W. M. Rossetti were the only PRBs who felt

³⁷ *PRBJ*, 32 (15 December 1851).

³⁸ *Germ*, 58.

³⁹ John Holmes, 'Pre-Raphaelitism, Science, and the Arts in *The Germ*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2015): 699.

⁴⁰ *PRBJ*, 34 (19 December 1850). WMR was the only one who voted against anonymity. See *PRBJ*, 114–16 (Appendix 4) for lists of other proposed titles for the *Germ*.

that they should persevere with the magazine even if its first issue proved unsuccessful.⁴¹ This appeared on 1 January 1850. Stephens sent the finished draft of his essay, ‘which he has touched up and altered considerably’, to William Michael, the appointed editor, on 12 January.⁴² On the 14th, Stephens attended a meeting at John Lucas Tupper’s house, with Woolner and William Michael; the article was rigorously read through and corrected, then left with Tupper ‘to be printed’.⁴³ The next day, William and George Tupper decided on a new title for the piece: ‘The Purpose attempted in Early Italian Art’.⁴⁴ William corrected the proofs of Stephens’s essay on 23 January, and it finally appeared in the second number of the *Germ* on the 31st, in 500 copies.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, no such detailed chronology exists for ‘Modern Giants’; it is not mentioned in either the *PRB Journal* or the Brotherhood’s correspondence. Stephens probably began writing it in early February 1850. It was in that month that he accepted the commission to paint the copy of Hans Holbein’s *William Warham* and made his first designs depicting the Marquis and Griselda from Chaucer’s *The Clerk’s Tale*. He was therefore occupied by literary and artistic pursuits at the same time, and this is reflected in the essays themselves, which announce Pre-Raphaelitism as a movement in both art and literature. ‘Italian Art’, by its very title, addresses the former, while ‘Modern Giants’ speaks to ‘the Poets of the present day’ and ‘the active poetry of modern life’.⁴⁶

‘Italian Art’ demonstrates Stephens’s acute knowledge of art history, already wide-ranging for his twenty-two years of age. The essay begins by reasserting the *Germ*’s central thesis: ‘an endeavour to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature’.⁴⁷ Stephens intersperses his text with quotations from contemporary poems by Robert Browning (‘Pictor Ignotus’) and Tennyson (‘Sir Galahad’), and a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson (‘The American Scholar’) – three PRB ‘Immortals’.⁴⁸ Emerson’s ‘American Scholar’ noticeably influenced the

⁴¹ ‘We [FGS, WHH and WMR] talked about the magazine, and are quite unanimous in considering that the first number must appear; but all except Stephens and myself are somewhat inclined to drop it after that, whether successful or no’; *PRBJ*, 30 (10 December 1850).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 42 (12 January 1850).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43 (14 January 1850).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43 (15 January 1850).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 46 (23 January 1850) and 49 (31 January 1850).

⁴⁶ Frederic George Stephens (pseudonym ‘Laura Savage’), ‘Modern Giants’, *Germ*, 169–73.

⁴⁷ Stephens, ‘Italian Art’, 58.

⁴⁸ Robert Browning, ‘Pictor Ignotus’, in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845); Tennyson, ‘Sir Galahad’, in *Poems* (1842); Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘The American Scholar’, delivered 1838 and published in *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures* (1849).

interrogative tone of Stephens's article. The reader is often questioned directly, as in the passage quoted in 'Italian Art':

The time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness,—
 'Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'
 Is this so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee
 nature and God, and drink truth dry?⁴⁹

Stephens paraphrases Emerson's essay elsewhere in the article, when he urges the reader to 'Never forget that there is in the wide river of nature something which every body who has a rod and line may catch, precious things which one may dive for'.⁵⁰ Not only does this extend the metaphor of the 'new channel' invoked at the beginning of the essay, but also recalls Emerson's comparison of the close-mindedness of 'the literary class' to 'a boy dread[ing] the water before he has learned that he can swim'.⁵¹

The following important passage in Stephens's essay, familiar in Pre-Raphaelite scholarship, compellingly summarises the Brotherhood's intentions and is worth quoting again for this reason:

[N]othing can be more humble than the pretension to the observation of facts alone, and the truthful rendering of them. If we are not to depart from established principles, how are we to advance at all? Are we to remain still? Remember, no thing remains still; that which does not advance falls backward. That this movement is an advance, and that it is of nature herself, is shown by its going nearer to truth in every object produced, and by its being guided by the very principles the ancient painters followed, as soon as they attained the mere power of representing an object faithfully.

A close reading of the concluding statement for this paragraph reveals the subtlety of Stephens's argument: 'These principles are now revived, not from them, though through their example, but from nature herself'. In other words, the artists are not merely copying the 'ancient painters', or even imitating them, but emulating their artistic practice of 'representing an object faithfully' as it was seen in nature. The PRBs were looking at their own times with the same the closely observant gaze as a medieval artist. 'The modern artist does not retire to monasteries', Stephens states earlier in the article, 'but he may show his participation in the same high feeling by a firm attachment to truth in every point of representation'. That the Pre-Raphaelites were 'participating' with earlier painters is in keeping with the spirit of artistic collaboration which defined the Brotherhood's everyday activities. For this reason, scholars have highlighted Stephens's 'Italian Art' as the closest the PRB came to a

⁴⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'The American Scholar', in *Nature; Addresses, and Lectures* (1849), republished in Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983), 68. FGS slightly misquotes 'Is it so bad then?' from Emerson's original.

⁵⁰ Stephens, 'Italian Art', 60.

⁵¹ Emerson, 'American Scholar', 68.

manifesto.⁵²

With an authoritative voice, Stephens invokes a roll call of Italian artists from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Benozzo Gozzoli, Giotto, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Fra Angelico (‘(well named)’, he quips), Masaccio, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Baccio della Porta (now Fra Bartolomeo) and Andrea Orcagna. ‘[I]n nearly all the works of the painters of this school’, Stephens declares, ‘will be found a character of gentleness, grace, and freedom, which cannot be surpassed by any other school’. The source of these qualities is indisputable: ‘their peculiar attainment to simple nature alone’. His approach combines close looking with an awareness of the historical context of a painting’s production. After all, the devotional panels and altarpieces which a reader/viewer could see in 1850 on the walls of the National Gallery, for example, could not be farther removed from their original environments in medieval churches and cathedrals. In a footnote, Stephens cites the printed sources from which many of his observations were drawn: Jean Baptiste Seroux d’Agincourt’s six-volume *Histoire de l’Art par les monuments* (1823); Giovanni Rosini’s seven-volume *Storia della Pittura Italiana* (1839–47); William Young Ottley’s *The Italian School of Design, Fac-similes of Drawings by Painters and Sculptors of Italy* (1823).⁵³ He had therefore not seen any of the originals in person, and knew them only from monochromatic engraved reproductions in modern publications. He uses this possible flaw in his project to his advantage: modern printing technologies could provide artists and casual observers alike the opportunity to experience the art of the past. This did affect his observations.

Specific examples are provided to bolster Stephens’s argument. He lingers on a subject by Orcagna:

[L]et us instance the ‘Air Demons’ of Orcagna, where there is a woman borne through the air by an Evil Spirit. Her expression is the most terrible imaginable; she grasps her bearer with desperation, looking out around her into space, agonized with terror. There are other figures in the same picture of men who have been cast down, and are falling, through the air: one descends with his hands tied, his chin up, and long hair hanging from his head in a mass. [...] Altogether, this picture contains perhaps a greater amount of bold imagination and originality of conception than any of the kind ever painted.⁵⁴

⁵² D. S. R. Welland, *The Pre-Raphaelites in Literature and Art* (London: George G. Harrap, 1953), 20; Dinah Roe, “‘Me, Who Ride Alone’: Male Chastity in Pre-Raphaelite Poetry and Art”, in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities: Constructions of Masculinity in Art and Literature*, ed. Amelia Yeates and Serena Trowbridge (London: Routledge, 2014), 152.

⁵³ Stephens, ‘Italian Art’, 62, footnote, which also acknowledges ‘the “Gates of San Giovanni”, by Ghiberti; of which [...] a cast of one entire is set up in the Central School of Design, Somerset House; portions of the same are also in the Royal Academy’.

⁵⁴ Stephens, ‘Italian Art’, 62.

The picture in question may be the *Triumph of Death* fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa, then attributed to Orcagna, which was reproduced in Carlo Lasinio's book of engravings of the Campo Santo frescoes, famed for having excited the nascent PRB in 1848 (Fig. 46). The right-hand portion of the image is dominated by a group of winged demons carrying the souls of the damned. Stephens concentrates on the immediate emotional impact of the image, instead of analysing formal elements such as composition, form, tone and texture. A leading factor behind this was, of course, the engraving's total lack of colour, and the impossibility of comparing it with the original fresco. Nevertheless, Orcagna's painting, thrillingly animated, has lost none of its power to inspire sensations of terror and pathos in the modern-day viewer. This is reinforced by further examples: the 'sublimity' of the archangels depicted by Giotto; the 'dignified simplicity' of Masaccio's *St Paul*, which presents the saint in isolation against a golden background, holding a book in one hand and a sword in the other.⁵⁵ These fourteenth- and fifteenth-century painters portrayed a broad range of emotions, communicated through bold, clear designs which any observer could understand. Accordingly, a key word in Stephens's article is 'simple', in opposition to the 'false and meretricious ornament' which High Renaissance artists introduced in later centuries.

One of the most memorable and original passages in 'Modern Giants' furthers Stephens's thesis of finding poetic inspiration in everyday life and supposedly 'low' subjects. Too often, for him, 'a modern Poet or Artist [...] rambles into ancient Greece or Rome, awakening not one half the sympathy in the spectator'. Instead, 'incidents as may be seen in the streets every day' are far more likely to stir powerful emotions, and the poet need look no further for a subject exemplifying charity:

For example, walking with a friend the other day, we met an old woman, exceedingly dirty, restlessly pattering along the kerb of a crowded thoroughfare, trying to cross: her eyes were always wandering here and there, and her mouth was never still; her object was evident, but for my own part, I must needs be fastidious and prefer to allow her to take the risk of being run over, to overcoming my own disgust. Not so my friend; he marched up manfully, and putting his arm over the old woman's shoulder, led her across as carefully as though she were a princess.⁵⁶

The narrator is firstly ashamed at his 'own disgust', and then 'frightened; I expected to see the old woman change into a tall angel and take him off to heaven, leaving me her original shape to repent

⁵⁵ The archangels, 'who stand singly, holding their sceptres, and with relapsed wings', are probably those in Giotto's fresco of *God Sending Gabriel to the Virgin* in the Arena Chapel, Padua (ca. 1306). Masaccio's *St Paul* (ca. 1426), a panel from a much larger altarpiece, is now in the Museo Nazionale di Pisa.

⁵⁶ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 170.

in'. His friend's kindly act has benefited all three parties: the woman is safe, the young man has performed his Christian duty, and the narrator bears witness to the importance of the moment. Stephens – for there can be no doubt that the narrator is he – concludes that this small, simple occurrence, which lasted for not more than a few seconds amid the bustle and noise of a London street, is 'as poetical as any in the life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary or any one else'. Literary realism has filtered into what is ostensibly an essay on art and poetry.

The allusion to St Elizabeth of Hungary is telling, for it suggests that the incident involving the old woman was actually witnessed by Stephens and that the friend in question was James Collinson. Collinson wrote to Stephens shortly after the fourth *Germ* was published, and made an explicit reference to the above passage in 'Modern Giants': 'I am doing what I can for the good cause (Popery) and I am sure that you like your interesting friend in Germ No. 4 can have no objection to give an old lady a lift in spite of her very red cloak, which gets terribly sprinkled with mud just now'.⁵⁷ Collinson appears to be playfully acknowledging himself as 'your interesting friend'. His light-hearted mention of 'Popery' and a red cloak points to his painting *The Renunciation of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary*, completed in 1850 (Fig. 47). An overtly Roman Catholic depiction of an episode from the life of a medieval saint, it features a woman wearing a scarlet cape. St Elizabeth was known for her acts of charity, and had recently been the subject of a play by Charles Kingsley, *The Saint's Tragedy* (1848), which was known to the Brotherhood and to Christina Rossetti.⁵⁸ As Alastair Grieve has outlined, they admired Kingsley's 'use of thirteenth-century sources to present an historically accurate drama', and his 'frank discussion of moral problems'.⁵⁹ In the preface for the first edition of the play, the Christian socialist F. D. Maurice advised readers not to judge the historical setting and characters Kingsley had adopted: 'The age to which they belong is not to be contemplated as if it were apart from us; [...] to be condemned for its strangeness. The passions which worked in it

⁵⁷ JC to FGS, undated (after 30 April 1850, when *Germ* 4 was published), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, ff. 4–5.

⁵⁸ 'He [Mr Bellamy] says that Kingsley, Author of *The Saint's Tragedy*, wrote the tale in *Fraser* named "Yeast"; *PRBJ*, 50 (2 February 1850). 'I have heard of *The Saint's Tragedy* from Mr Collinson'; CGR to WMR, 26 September 1849, in *Family Letters of CGR*, 12.

⁵⁹ Alastair Grieve, 'A Notice on Illustrations to Charles Kingsley's "The Saint's Tragedy" by Three Pre-Raphaelite Artists', *Burlington Magazine* 111, no. 794 (May 1969), 293. See also Éva Péteri, 'Revisiting James Collinson's Representation of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary', *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 27 (Autumn 2018).

must be those which are working in ourselves'.⁶⁰ Maurice also declared that *The Saint's Tragedy* 'suggests questions which are deeply interesting at the present time'.⁶¹ Stephens addresses the same notion in 'Modern Giants': the feelings of compassion which compelled his friend to help a poor old woman across the street in the present day are but a continuation of the feelings which drove St Elizabeth to perform her charitable acts in the Middle Ages.

Further evidence for Collinson as the 'friend' is provided by a small pencil and chalk sketch which he gave to Stephens (Fig. 48). Although undated, it was made before Collinson's resignation from the PRB in May 1850, as it is inscribed 'J. Collinson P.R.B.' and 'J. Collinson to his P.-R. Brother F. G. Stephens'.⁶² The drawing portrays the head and shoulders of an old woman, with a shawl covering her head and her right hand raised towards her mouth. Her face is brightly illuminated from the left, and her eyes glance heavenwards in a saintly attitude. It easily evokes the old woman in 'Modern Giants', 'her eyes [...] always wandering here and there [...] her mouth [...] never still'. In a way, it is rather a strange picture for a young man to give to his friend, unless, for Collinson and Stephens, it commemorated a specific event which they experienced together, and which the latter celebrated in print. Stephens's essay criticises modern writers (and by association modern artists) for choosing subjects 'with which they can never become intimately acquainted', thus reinforcing the factual nature of his anecdote, as something that he physically witnessed, and testifying to the deep impression it made on him.⁶³

Millais was probably inspired by Stephens's example of charity in a contemporary setting in his 1853 drawing *The Blind Man*, as some scholars have convincingly suggested.⁶⁴ The artist reversed the gender balance by depicting a woman leading the poor, blind man safely across a busy London thoroughfare. In addition, Stephens's theme of modern charity was taken up in Christina Rossetti's poem 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock', composed in 1851. The poem begins with an old widow knocking on the door of a middle-class home, begging to be given food and shelter, for 'this

⁶⁰ Charles Kingsley, *The Saint's Tragedy; or, The True Story of Elizabeth of Hungary* (London: John W. Parker, 1848), preface by F. D. Maurice, ii.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, viii.

⁶² Manson 1920, Plate 19 with notes. The original drawing is now untraced.

⁶³ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 170.

⁶⁴ Marcia Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64–65; Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith, *Millais* (London: Tate, 2007), 88.

wind is piercing cold, / [...] I have no home, am hungry, feeble, poor'. The female homeowner offers a limp apology before shutting the door, 'shivering' as she does so, thereby pitying herself instead of the widow. Two more helpless figures, an old man and a 'stunted child', knock on her door and are also turned away.⁶⁵ Christ himself appears in the last two stanzas to reveal that the three beggars had been a test by which to judge the woman's capacity for good, and he chastises her for putting her 'comforts' before her compassion. By choosing a realistic modern setting – the poem references 'the Workhouse' – Rossetti critiques the failure of Victorian bourgeois society to assist the less fortunate, in opposition to the positive model of charitable behaviour presented in Stephens's essay. Unlike the helpful young man in Stephens's 'Modern Giants', the woman is unable to overcome her feelings of repugnance and perform her Christian duty.

The next passage in 'Modern Giants' has become one of Stephens's most frequently quoted statements, as it illustrates the Pre-Raphaelites' interest in modern life:

And there is something else we miss; there is the poetry of the things about us; our railways, factories, mines, roaring cities, steam vessels, and the endless novelties and wonders produced every day; which if they were found only in the *Thousand and One Nights*, or in any poem classical or romantic, would be gloried without end.⁶⁶

An unusual reference within this sentence has been overlooked. Stephens borrowed W. M. Rossetti's copy of the *Thousand and One Nights* in 1850 or earlier, and was particularly interested in the 'Story of the City of Brass'.⁶⁷ He makes an explicit reference to this tale elsewhere in 'Modern Giants' when describing 'the white cloud above the chimney-shaft [of a locomotive], escaping like the spirits Solomon put his seal upon, in the Arabian Tales'.⁶⁸ In the 'City of Brass', a fisherman discovers 'a bottle of brass, stopped with lead, which was sealed with the signet of Solomon [...] And the fisherman came forth and broke it; whereupon there proceeded from it a blue smoke, which united with the clouds of heaven; [...] Then of that smoke there was formed a person of terrible aspect, of

⁶⁵ Christina Rossetti, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock', in Christina Rossetti, *Poems and Prose*, ed. Jan Marsh (London: Everyman, 1994), 27–28.

⁶⁶ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 170. Quoted in Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting*, 65; Nicholas Freeman, *Conceiving the City: London, Literature, and Art 1870–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23; Holmes, *Pre-Raphaelites and Science*, 64.

⁶⁷ 'Stephens wrote to me on Monday, asking to have the volume of the "1001 Nights", [containing] the "Story of the City of Brass", which he wishes to *read again* [my emphasis]'; *PRBJ*, 87 (26 January 1851).

⁶⁸ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 171.

terrific make, whose head would reach as high as a mountain'.⁶⁹ This fearsome spirit was one of the mythical jinn, which King Solomon, 'when he was incensed against them', had imprisoned in the bottle and sealed using his magical signet ring. Stephens saw this fantasy as analogous to the force and presence of steam-powered machinery in contemporary society: 'these mightier spirits are bound in a faster vessel', he continues, 'and then let forth, as of little worth, when their work is done'. The magic ring enabled Solomon to control supernatural forces. Similarly, artists and poets might harness the power of 'railways, factories, mines, roaring cities, steam vessels, and the endless novelties and wonders produced every day', for their own creative purposes, if only they possess the ingenuity to do so.

This helps to explain the 'Giants' of the essay's title. Stephens's tone is immediately direct and confrontational: 'Yes! there are Giants on the earth in these days; but it is their great bulk, and the nearness of our view, which prevents us from perceiving their grandeur'.⁷⁰ He recognised that his chosen topic was a kind of elephant in the room – a monumental force looming over contemporary society like one of Solomon's imprisoned jinn, but which many people either failed to notice, or if they did, dismissed as unworthy of attention. The 'Giants' of Victorian science and technology were not yet valued by painters and poets because they were too close to their own time; they lacked the comfortable distance, the patina of time, which made picturesque subjects from history, mythology and the Bible more attractive to nineteenth-century artists and writers. In this way, Stephens exposes a deficiency of perception – a word he uses four times throughout the essay.⁷¹ References to seeing and observing, and to eyes, are also frequent, although these gazes are not directed retrospectively towards the past, but actively engage with the living present.

Reviews of the Royal Academy in *The Critic* in 1851

Despite the failure of the *Germ* project, it was a milestone in Stephens's early career as an art critic.

In January 1851, W. M. Rossetti noted that 'Stephens has taken up art-criticism for the *Critic*, which I

⁶⁹ *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments; or, The Thousand and One Nights*, trans. Edward William Lane, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848), 2:176. Lane's translation of the *Nights* was first published in monthly instalments from 1838–40, and in numerous collected editions after 1840.

⁷⁰ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 169.

⁷¹ '[O]ur individual perceptions'; 'the popular perception of the essentials of Poetry'; 'we lose the pure power of perception'; original powers of perception'.

had declined because of my connexion with the *Spectator*'.⁷² *The Critic of Literature, Art, Science, and the Drama* had been started by Edward Cox and James Lowe in November 1843 as a monthly magazine 'consisting almost entirely of reviews'.⁷³ By 1851, it was published twice monthly, with a circulation of up to 6,300 copies; Stephens's first article on 15 January reached 2,000 readers.⁷⁴ It was his first major appointment as an art critic, and his first opportunity to communicate Pre-Raphaelite principles to a wider audience. He was writing outside the PRB-regulated parameters of the *Germ*, but under the safety of anonymous publication; when he did sign his articles in the *Critic*, it was often pseudonymously.

The *Critic* had marked out its Pre-Raphaelite sympathies with two laudatory reviews of the *Germ* in February and June 1850.⁷⁵ Cox declared in the first article that the PRB magazine 'has peculiar and uncommon claims to attention', purposefully noting that it 'is the production of a party of young persons [...] of no common minds' – a theme to which he would return.⁷⁶ Besides praising the poetry (which he did by simply reprinting the poems in full), Cox also commended 'the essays on art [...] conceived with an equal appreciation of its *meaning* and requirements'. Cox's second article on 1 June lamented the demise of the *Germ*, which had 'abounded with the promise of a rich harvest to be anticipated from the maturity of those whose youth could accomplish so much'.⁷⁷ Youth therefore signified innovation, and was as much a reason for Cox approaching the young PRBs to write for the *Critic* as the art-literary aims which they had formulated.

Stephens and W. M. Rossetti were introduced to Cox through Major Calder Campbell, who had contributed a sonnet to the second number of the *Germ*.⁷⁸ On 2 February 1850, before Cox's first review of the *Germ* appeared in the *Critic*, he had already approached Rossetti:

[P]roposing that, in case *The Germ* should not continue, [...] one of the Art-writers in it or I should write on the same subject for his paper, in which case he says he would resign the entire management of the articles on Art, the Exhibitions, etc. He would not be able, however, to offer any remuneration in cash. This proposal is not [...] disadvantageous to the P.R.B., as it would enable us to review the exhibitions in our own feeling,

⁷² *PRBJ*, 87 (January 1851).

⁷³ Josef L. Altholz, 'Mister Serjeant Cox, John Crockford, and Origins of "Crockford's Clerical Directory"', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1984), 154.

⁷⁴ 'Circulation of the *Critic*', *Critic* (15 November 1851), 531.

⁷⁵ 'The Germ', *Critic* (15 February 1850), 94–95.

⁷⁶ WMR reprinted this review in his facsimile reprint of the *Germ* in 1901.

⁷⁷ 'Art and Poetry', *Critic* (1 June 1850), 278.

⁷⁸ Campbell (1798–1857) was described by WMR as 'a retired Officer of the Indian army, and a somewhat popular writer of tales, verses, etc. [...] he must have called the particular attention of Mr. Cox to "The Germ"'; *Germ*, 8 and 12.

and might besides lead to some other literary employment.⁷⁹

The second issue of the *Germ* had been published only three days before, on 31 January, so Cox's keenness to acquire its authors for his own publication is clear. The following day Rossetti 'wrote to Stephens about Cox's proposal, and also saw Campbell relative to it. He [Campbell] advises me to accept. If I do so, it must be kept quite close, as it won't do that it should be generally known that a P.R.B. writes reviews of the exhibitions'.⁸⁰

Eventually, W. M. Rossetti wrote articles for the *Critic* from February to November 1850.⁸¹ On 4 October, Stephens once again received from Rossetti a 'note containing the proposal from the Editor of The Critic'.⁸² The note does not survive, but Cox was probably suggesting that Stephens should also join the magazine, of which Stephens approved: 'there would be no harm in having half-a-dozen P-R.B. organs', he wrote. He did not agree immediately because he had serious intentions for his painting *The Proposal*, travelling to Sevenoaks later in the month to work on the background (see Chapter 3). In January 1851, however, he visited the Exhibition of Modern British Art at the Gallery of the Old Society of Painters in Water Colours and wrote his first review for the *Critic*.

Stephens certainly wrote about the exhibition in his 'own feeling', as W. M. Rossetti had hoped. After a brief, acerbic preamble – 'There is less, we think, to reprobate than usual in Water Colour Exhibitions' – he proceeds to highlight thirty-six drawings and sketches, as if taking the reader's arm and leading them through the galleries, pointing out merits and faults as and when he sees them.⁸³ Some remarks can scarcely be considered reviews at all, as when he alights upon a *Sketch of a Child at Rome* by Spencer Compton, 2nd Marquess Earl of Northampton: 'This is, indeed, put forward as an exhibition of sketches, but the propriety of sending such trifles as this is questionable'. Yet he saved his harshest critiques for a design by John Tenniel for a fresco in the Palace of Westminster, *Alexander's Feast (St Cecilia)*.⁸⁴ In this, the polemical tones of 'Laura Savage' return to

⁷⁹ *PRBJ*, 51 (2 February 1850).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 51 (3 February 1850).

⁸¹ Angela Thirlwell, *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 122. WMR continued to write occasional articles, such as book reviews; *Critic* (1 August 1851), 353–54.

⁸² FGS to WMR, 3–4 October 1850, ADC, Box 18, Folder 10.

⁸³ [Frederic George Stephens], 'Exhibition of Modern British Art. Gallery of the Old Society of Painters in Water Colours', *Critic* (15 January 1851), 43–44.

⁸⁴ An illustration of John Dryden's 1697 poem 'Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Musique. An Ode in Honour of St Cecilia's Day'.

attack Tenniel's sketch, as does the Pre-Raphaelites' disdain for the academic style of drawing:

How long fresco is to be exposed to such condemnation as this infers, we know not. If vile, wooden, academical, laborious drawing, without feeling or knowledge, if personal ugliness, a perfect disregard of proportion, fearful to contemplate, are essential to works in fresco, as this asserts them to be[,] the longer the revival of that branch of art is deferred the better, in our opinion. There is no excuse for the faults of this work; it is laborious without feeling, and learned without thought. The slang phrase of the studios, 'wooden', expresses its general qualities better than any other we can select.

Although Tenniel's studies for his fresco of St Cecilia playing an organ, surrounded by various figures in medieval costume, do not survive, the finished wall painting in the Poets Hall in the Palace of Westminster (Fig. 49) can be used as to compare with Stephens's objections. He uses this to address the problems with modern fresco painting generally.

Almost immediately, Cox expressed dissatisfaction with Stephens's work. On 21 January, he complained to William Michael that 'Stevens [sic] does not work like you – see his notice in last' – referring to the review discussed above.⁸⁵ On 14 March, after Stephens had published reviews of two more exhibitions, Cox enlarged his opinion: 'Don't you think friend Stephens is a little too severe – he should be somewhat more descriptive of pictures – not such mere dogmatic judgements'. He also suggested that Rossetti should 'give him [Stephens] a hint and shew him how you did it which was a model of such notices'.⁸⁶ In other words, the editor had not expected Stephens to be quite so strong in his opinions, although it should hardly have been a surprise coming from the author of an essay as accusatory in tone as 'Modern Giants'. Stephens's quiet, introverted nature was in some ways deceptive, contrasting with the fiery characteristics of his reviews; if he did not like a work of art, he did not shy away from condemning it. The anonymity of periodicals would have enabled his audacity. He responded to Cox's comments to W. M. Rossetti on 24 April, lamenting what he felt was the editor's small-mindedness: '[I] thought a distinct assertion of certain principles would be (by certain, I mean settled) of service as affording the Englishmen a means of judging for themselves according to the appearance of Nature itself[,] not thro' the mysterious jargon of Studios and Reviews'.⁸⁷ He had previously referred to 'the slang phrase of the studios' in the review discussed above, suggesting that

⁸⁵ Edward Cox to WMR, 21 January 1851, Bodleian Library, MS. Facs. d. 277, f. 109 (MS: ADC).

⁸⁶ Cox to WMR, 14 March 1851, Bodleian Library, MS. Facs. d. 277, ff. 106–07 (MS: ADC); quoted in *PRBJ*, 245, note 7.8. The reviews were: 'The Winter Exhibition of Water-Colour Drawings and Sketches, at Mr Grundy's', *Critic* (1 February 1851), 68, mentioned in *PRBJ*, 88 (2 February 1851); 'Exhibition at the British Institution', *Critic* (1 March 1851), 113–14. Four days before, FGS, short of 'tin' and needing to pay a debt, had asked WMR if he could get him a temporary reviewing position with the *Spectator* to earn 'a couple of sovereigns'; 10 March 1851, ADC, Box 18, Folder 10.

⁸⁷ FGS to WMR, 24 April 1851, ADC, Box 18, Folder 10; also quoted in *PRBJ*, 245, n. 7.8.

this ‘jargon’ was something he had experienced himself. He was therefore writing his articles from a personal standpoint, drawing upon his perspective as an insider at the RA. He was delighted that members of the PRB – himself and the Rossetti brothers – were writing for periodicals, exclaiming in his next letter: ‘Fancy, every P.R.B. with his own newspaper’.⁸⁸

Cox’s unease would not have been assuaged by Stephens’s next series of articles, reviewing the RA exhibition. The first two parts were published on 15 May and 1 June 1851.⁸⁹ A note from Stephens to William Michael on 4 June shows that, to his annoyance, ‘Cox divided my article on [the] R.A. so there is nothing about the P-R.B. or what I had written relative to Ruskin’.⁹⁰ Stephens was writing at an important moment in the development of Pre-Raphaelitism. John Ruskin’s famed letters to the *Times* on 13 and 30 May 1851 commended the Brotherhood’s ‘fidelity to a certain order of truth’ and their continuation of the veracity and simplicity of medieval art.⁹¹ These letters have been credited with ‘turning the tide in favour of Pre-Raphaelitism’ after a period of intense critical hostility.⁹² It should be remarked, however, that Ruskin was rather more cautious about endorsing the PRB than has usually been acknowledged.⁹³ Moreover, the Pre-Raphaelites’ own reactions to Ruskin’s opinion of their work have been less frequently examined; it has been assumed that they were pleased with his remarks and relieved that he had come to their rescue at a moment of critical condemnation.

A day or two after Ruskin’s first *Times* letter was published, W. M. Rossetti considered the ways in which the PRB might issue a response:

One point which [...] it might be advantageous to notice in a letter from some of ourselves to *The Times* is that Ruskin says something of P.R.B. ‘Romanist and Tractarian tendencies’ in reference to the *Mariana* and to Collins’s picture. Such tendencies, as utterly non-existent in fact, it might not be amiss to repudiate; the doing would besides afford an opportunity for entering into any other details or rectifications seeming

⁸⁸ DGR contributed smaller reviews of individual paintings for the *Critic*; republished in *The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911), 570–86.

⁸⁹ [Frederic George Stephens], ‘Exhibition of the Royal Academy’, *Critic* (15 May 1851), 239–40, and ‘Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Second Notice’, *Critic* (1 June 1851), 265–66.

⁹⁰ Undated (‘4 June ’51’ added in pencil by (?)WMR), ADC, Box 18, Folder 10.

⁹¹ John Ruskin, ‘The Pre-Raphaelites’, *Times*, 13 May 1851, 8–9; ‘The Pre-Raphaelite Artists’, *Times* (30 May 1851), 8.

⁹² Parris, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, 83.

⁹³ ‘I do not wish in any way to dispute or invalidate the general truth of your [the *Times*’s] critique on the Royal Academy; nor am I surprised at the estimate which the writer formed of the pictures in question [by Millais and Hunt] when rapidly compared with works of totally different style and aim; [...] when I first saw the chief picture by Millais in the Exhibition of last year I had nearly come to the same conclusions myself. [...] I have no acquaintance with any of these artists, and very imperfect sympathy with them’; Ruskin, ‘The Pre-Raphaelites’, 8.

advisable.⁹⁴

Much has already been written about contemporary suspicions that the Pre-Raphaelites were expressing sympathies with Roman Catholicism, and with Tractarianism, the so-called Oxford Movement, which since the 1830s and 1840s had sought to revive elements of medieval Roman Catholicism in the Anglican liturgy.⁹⁵ Fredeman cites a review by William Michael in the *Spectator* in October 1851 as his ‘first extended attempt to clarify Pre-Raphaelite principles’, but admits that Rossetti ‘did not in that article address himself to Ruskin’s charge of “Romanist and Tractarian tendencies”’.⁹⁶ As will be demonstrated shortly, Stephens fulfilled this need much earlier, in the immediate aftermath of Ruskin’s *Times* letters – a fact which has not been acknowledged before.

The third part of Stephens’s review of the RA noticing the PRB’s paintings and the Ruskin letters appeared in the *Critic* on 14 June.⁹⁷ Observant readers would have noticed that it was signed with the name ‘Laura Savage’, conspicuous as the ‘author’ of the polemical essay in the *Germ*, ‘Modern Giants’, the previous year. (Stephens’s previous two articles on the Academy were unsigned.) It is significant that he chose to resurrect Savage for this review, rather than John Seward. Like the initials ‘PRB’ with which Millais, Hunt, D. G. Rossetti and Collinson signed their paintings, Stephens’s female penname covertly signified modern, subversive ideals.⁹⁸ He devoted whole paragraphs to *The Woodman’s Daughter* (Fig. 33), *Mariana* and *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* by Millais; *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* by Hunt; *Convent Thoughts* by Charles Allston Collins; and *Chaucer at the Court of Edward III* by Madox Brown. They are among the first descriptions of Pre-Raphaelite paintings written by a member of the Brotherhood.

Stephens personalises his article with asides to the reader which are subtly autobiographical. His observation that the background of Hunt’s *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia*, ‘an autumn scene in a beech wood, we wish especially to notice is an admirable transcript from nature’, is informed by the

⁹⁴ *PRBJ*, 94 (13–15 May 1851).

⁹⁵ For example, Alastair Grieve, ‘The Pre-Raphaelites and the Anglican High Church’, *Burlington Magazine* 111, no. 794 (May 1969): 294–95.

⁹⁶ *PRBJ*, 246, note 13.43; William Michael Rossetti, ‘Pre-Raphaelitism’, *Spectator* (4 October 1851): 955–57. Ruskin expanded his earlier letters to the *Times* into a pamphlet, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, published August 1851.

⁹⁷ ‘Laura Savage’ [Frederic George Stephens], ‘Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Third Notice’, *Critic* (14 June 1851), 289–90.

⁹⁸ JEM’s *Isabella*, WHH’s *Rienzi*, DGR’s *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and JC’s *Italian Image-Sellers at a Roadside Alehouse* are all inscribed ‘PRB’, and were all exhibited in 1849.

fact that he had stayed with Hunt in Sevenoaks while he was painting *Valentine*, and had seen the beech wood with his own eyes. He therefore maintained the importance of ‘individual perceptions’ which he had expressed in ‘Modern Giants’. His personal experience of watching Millais painting *The Woodman’s Daughter* (‘in our opinion, the best of all’) in Wytham Woods near Oxford in the summer of 1850, is translated into the prose evocation of the picture’s ‘extraordinary finish’ and ‘multitude of detail’. After situating the figures of the boy and the girl, Stephens turns to their surroundings:

Every weed and every leaf, with their extraordinary variety of texture and form – surface of every quality – and, what we never saw so successfully depicted before – every variety of value, as respects solidity, which is very seldom attempted even, is here given with a truth which is marvellous. The scene is a wild fir plantation, so the reader may readily imagine the wonderful variety of objects and qualities produced, and every one with the utmost fidelity to nature. The light – broad sunlight – was never equalled perhaps in art before.

This passage can be framed as a direct answer to Stephens’s/Savage’s plea, in ‘Modern Giants’, for an artist to render ‘a transcript of day itself, with the purple shadow upon the mountains, and across the still lake’, in forceful contrast to ‘murky old masters, with dismally demoniac trees, and dull waters of lead, colourless and like ice’.⁹⁹ Millais is cast as a kind of saviour who has reinvigorated and literally brightened English landscape painting with natural light, a particularised sense of place, and a microscopic botanical accuracy. The hyphens which punctuate the paragraph in breathless fashion recreate the experience of looking at *The Woodman’s Daughter*, with its profusion of natural elements jostling for the viewer’s attention.

The hyperbole of Stephens’s praise – ‘extraordinary’, ‘marvellous’, ‘never equalled perhaps in art before’ – is a riposte to the aggressive language levelled at the Pre-Raphaelite style by other critics in 1851. The reviewer in the *Times* on 7 May had decried the Brotherhood’s ‘offensive and absurd productions’ and ‘monkish follies’.¹⁰⁰ Another critic for the *Athenaeum* begrudged the ‘old perversity’ of Millais’s paintings; ‘*The Woodman’s Daughter* [...] is of the same bad school’.¹⁰¹ The *Art-Journal*, despite characterising the Brotherhood as a ‘revolutionary faction’, addressed the young artists’ realism with a patronising tone: ‘they dream of material beauty, but they never get beyond the

⁹⁹ Stephens, ‘Modern Giants’, 173.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Second Notice’, *Times* (7 May 1851), 8. This review was the catalyst for Ruskin’s first letter to that newspaper.

¹⁰¹ ‘Royal Academy’, *Athenaeum* no. 1232 (7 June 1851), 609: ‘Of the pre-Raffaelite brethren little need now be said – since what has been already said was said in vain’.

study of the skeleton'.¹⁰² When describing *The Woodman's Daughter*, the same reviewer complained that 'the grassy horizon under the trees at a few yards off runs well up into the foliage of the trees. [...] Throughout the picture generally every infirmity of early Art is exaggerated'. Stephens's appraisal of Pre-Raphaelitism was therefore something of an uphill battle, and it is easy to see why he wrote somewhat anxiously to W. M. Rossetti wondering when his defence would be published.

After describing these paintings, Stephens finally tackles Ruskin's 'defence' of the PRB:

Mr Ruskin's letter to *The Times*, which was reprinted in a previous number of this journal, relating to these last mentioned pictures, calls, we think, for some remark. While allowing a very high degree of merit, he attributes a 'Tractarian and Romanist tendency' to them – an assertion, we imagine, scarcely worthy of that most talented and eloquent writer, whose works have done much to assert the true dignity and mission of art. We must, with great deference, protest against the assumption of this tendency as being found in these works, particularly as relates to the artists themselves, for we all know that our good Protestant, Mr Bull, is extremely apt to take these phrases as a portion of the red rag of Popery, and, confounding the painter with his work, to toss both into the air. Stick but these words upon a man, and, shocked and terrified, our excellent John rends up the ground, and goes at once. We do not even see that painting a nun in a convent garden (this is the only point which can possibly have connection with the remark) has necessarily a 'Romanist or Tractarian tendency'. No one, we fancy, will imagine her thoughts can be purely in human happiness, or that depicting such a subject is a recommendation to any young lady at the exhibition to go and do likewise. Surely there is no false sentiment or affectation in the picture, or the choice of subject. The toilet table, with its triptych [sic] and burning lamp, in Mr Millais' *Mariana*, does not appear to us to convey anything of an 'idolatrour' precept, or to be otherwise than within the limits of propriety, which every artist is allowed in the introduction of accessories. In both cases the moral seems to be rather a warning from a purposeless and idle existence, than a recommendation of such.¹⁰³

Ruskin's letter to the *Times* on 13 May had spoken firstly of the 'idolatrour toilet-table' in the background of Millais's *Mariana*, comprising a small altar with a triptych, flowers, a stained-glass window and a hanging lamp. He also wrote that he had 'no particular sympathy with Mr Collins' lady in white [*Convent Thoughts*], because her sympathies are limited by a dead wall'.¹⁰⁴ Stephens's approach to these works is more pragmatic. He describes the particularised objects in Mariana's chamber simply as they appear: 'a window with painted glass, and the embroidery work itself, with an oratory, and its lamp burning in the dark shadow'.¹⁰⁵ He therefore asks the viewer to consider the painting's visual assets – its minutely painted interior, its modulations of light and shadow – in a more objective way, and to put aside its potentially problematic religious associations. Regarding Collins's *Convent Thoughts*, which portrays, in Stephens's words, 'a nun in a garden, looking thoughtfully at a

¹⁰² 'The Royal Academy', *Art-Journal* (June 1851), 153.

¹⁰³ Stephens, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', 290. Ruskin's first *Times* letter (13 May 1851) had been reprinted in the *Critic* (15 May 1851), 240–41, with no disclaimer that it was a reprint. John Bull was an imagined personification of England in popular cartoons and caricatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, beginning with *The History of John Bull* (1712) by John Arbuthnot. He is pictured as a stout, middle-aged man wearing a Union Flag waistcoat.

¹⁰⁴ Ruskin, 'The Pre-Raffaelites', 8.

¹⁰⁵ Stephens, 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', 290.

bloom of the passion flowers', he is careful to stress that 'the subject is an invention' drawn from the artist's 'highly poetical imagination'.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the 'Romanist and Tractarian tendencies' which Ruskin detected must be ascribed to Collins himself, and not to the Brotherhood as a whole. Stephens also expresses his opinion of the painting's possible faults: 'We think [...] that the right hand of the nun is a little too large, and the whole of the picture rather flat, and wanting gradation of colour and half-tint'. Yet this is his only objection in an otherwise laudatory review of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the RA in 1851, defending them against both negative critiques and Ruskin's letters.

Later that summer, Stephens missed an opportunity to write a review of Ruskin's *Pre-Raphaelitism* pamphlet, which the *Critic* had advertised in its 1 August issue.¹⁰⁷ On 6 August, he wrote to W. M. Rossetti that he was 'much annoyed that neither of us have the job' of reviewing the pamphlet, and threatened to quit the *Critic* altogether.¹⁰⁸ He was also yet to be paid for any of his contributions, which exacerbated the tension between him and Cox. In October, the latter confided to William Michael in a letter marked 'Private':

I am not at all satisfied with Stephens's doings in the art line – they are not the sort of thing for the *Critic*. I want [...] an article in each number, giving a judicious summary of the progress of arts, treated both as a narrative & with critical, not dogmatical pen (as he does) & dealing with art not according to the mechanics of painting but as Ruskin does – with bold & new views of its aesthetics. I think you would do this – if you comprehend my meaning.¹⁰⁹

It is difficult to see what was not 'bold & new' about Stephens's judgements, which wholeheartedly rejected the mediocrity of academic painting. Cox all but begged Rossetti to return as art critic; if not, he asked in the same letter if Rossetti knew 'anyone competent to do so, not a mere pretender to writing [...] I should prefer a Ruskinite'. Was Stephens, then, a more provocative critic? As we have seen, his prose was direct and even aggressive, and he had told William Michael that he wanted to encourage the audience to '[judge] for themselves according to the appearance of Nature itself', instead of simply propagating received ideas.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

¹⁰⁷ 'You will see in the last *Critic* an Advertisement of Ruskin's to publish [a] pamphlet, "Pre-R.ism", I made an application to be allowed to review it but too late, Mr Cox had been applied to the day before by some other contributor whom I hope fears the name of Rossetti'; FGS to WMR, 5 August 1851, ADC, Box 18, Folder 10. The same issue, 1 August 1851, did carry a book review by FGS, '*Chorea Sancti Viti* [...] by William Bell Scott', *Critic* (1 August 1851): 360 (signed 'F. G. S.').

¹⁰⁸ ADC, Box 18, Folder 10. In the same letter, FGS recounts that he was told by the *Critic*'s publisher, John Crockford, that the review of Ruskin's pamphlet was already 'in type' – however, it seems it was never printed.

¹⁰⁹ Edward Cox to WMR, 3 October 1851, Bodleian Library, MS. Facs. d. 277, ff. 110v–11 (MS: UBC).

Stephens's tenure with the *Critic* thus ended on a low note, although he persevered for two more years. In January and February 1853, D. G. Rossetti called on his circle of contacts to assist Stephens with finding employment with other journals, such as the *Daily News* and *Fraser's Magazine*, without success.¹¹⁰ Stephens told Hunt on 22 July 1853 that he was 'coming to a crisis with the *Critic* and shall shortly, I think, either be paid or decline further writing'.¹¹¹ Decades later, he described the situation in more detail to W. M. Rossetti:

Cox promised payment 'After a time'. I wrote for a year before asking for cash, which not being forthcoming, I gave him notice that I would continue unpaid for three months more. At the end of that period I ceased to send him anything. He never objected to me about what I wrote. In fact, no doubt, 'The *Critic*' could pay nobody.¹¹²

Nevertheless, Stephens becomes more involved with the wider Victorian art world as a result, in reviewing exhibitions and galleries for a large weekly publication. The *Critic* articles gave him the grounding he needed to produce far more ambitious articles for his next major appointment, the *Crayon*, which will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. The next chapter will return to Stephens's work as an artist in the mid-1850s.

¹¹⁰ DGR to FGS, 26 January, 1 and 14 February 1853, in *CDGR*, 1:230–31, 234–35. In the case of the *Daily News*, DGR asked the editor F. K. Hunt if FGS could review the British Institution, but Hunt had already 'made arrangements with Coventry Patmore (!) to undertake henceforward the whole of the Art business for the *Daily News*'.

¹¹¹ FGS to WHH, 22 July 1853, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

¹¹² FGS to WMR, 22 February 1907, ADC, Box 14, Folder 10; the last letter FGS ever wrote to WMR, about two weeks before his death on 9 March. A letter from Major Calder Campell to WMR indicates that WMR experienced the same problem with being paid for his own *Critic* articles: 'As to the Art matter, why I really think that you are in a position to expect remuneration for all prose writing; the gratuitous contributor is seldom valued, and I think the *Critic* ought, with its acknowledgement of subscribers, to pay all its contributors'; 3 May 1851, Bodleian Library, MS. Facs. d. 277, ff. 54–55.

Chapter 5: Portraits and Modern Life

Chapters 2 and 3 examined the developments in Stephens's art during the early years of the PRB in 1848–51 – developments which the present chapter will continue to detail. His paintings *Morte d'Arthur* and *The Proposal*, and his drawing *Dethe and the Riotours*, as well as his replica of the Holbein portrait, were his notable works thus far. Yet Stephens struggled with self-doubt and a lack of confidence in his artistic abilities, and his family's financial difficulties (discussed in Chapter 1) necessitated a constant need for 'tin' at this time.¹ His occasional articles for the *Critic* did not give him an income that was either regular or substantial; as the previous chapter demonstrated, the editor was slow to pay him for his contributions. Hunt wrote to Stephens in October 1852:

By your last letters I was glad to find that you are working hard – I had thought sometimes that you had given up your intentions of persevering in the Art[,] and altho' I regretted very much that a man of your talent should do this I felt convinced that you had not broken yourself away from it without having the [?] private reasons[,] and at the same time without feeling great pain at being obliged to do this, and on this account I have foreborne [sic] to allude to your cessation of perseverance further than at times when I have forgotten my intention[,] or it has been [...] overcome by a strong affectionate desire that you should not lose your inheritance if indifference alone was your only motive for permitting your claims to lie unknown.²

Hunt's words are sincere, expressing a genuine concern that Stephens's artistic talents might go to waste. The letter indirectly reveals Stephens's feelings of frustration, probably because of the high standards he was placing upon himself. Having written so passionately about the paintings of his fellow PRBs in the *Critic* the year before, he may have been daunted by his attempts to equal them. His recent disappointments – the poorly paid Holbein replica, the rejection of *The Proposal* by the RA – were at least soothed by a breakthrough, when his portrait of his stepmother Dorothy was accepted for the Academy exhibition of 1852 (Fig. 50), as will be discussed shortly.

In October 1852, Stephens was making studies for an unspecified new painting in Westminster Abbey, which piqued Hunt's interest, as he wrote in the same letter as above: 'If you are painting the background of a picture I shall be delighted to hear it, but if you are only doing it for study sake [sic], it seems to me that you are studying what your studying [sic] will hinder you from

¹ 'I am very sorry to hear that you are compelled to waste your time in search of tin'; WHH to FGS, undated (October(?) 1852), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 13–14. 'Tin', PRB slang for money.

² WHH to FGS, undated (October(?) 1852), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 15–16. WHH was staying at Clive Vale Farm, between Hastings and Fairlight on the south coast, in order to paint the background of *Our English Coasts* (1852; Tate).

ever making use of'.³ Hunt concluded that 'No great painter, good or bad, ever wasted his time and energies upon preparatory work longer than was necessary to give him a rude power of expressing his thoughts'.⁴ Stephens responded with another idea:

I am thinking of painting for the Ex[hibitio]n a small three-quarter about half size of nature, of my little niece who is staying with us; when they bring her down to breakfast, unwashed, she wears an old shawl of warm black with [a] narrow border containing much red[;] this with her clear skin and light hair comes very nice indeed. Do you think it will do?⁵

Stephens considered making this a 'fancy subject', and thought of titling it 'Just Up', thereby providing a loose narrative context for a simple portrayal of a young girl seated at a table and wearing a rustic shawl. He continued: 'I do not think you will advise me to attempt a picture, in the first case I [am] utterly without tin[,] and secondly would rather acquire a greater knowledge of painting by practice from nature as portraits and studies of the figure[,] and as I hope and trust to get in the Life this time shall have facilities for doing so'. His reference to the Life School at the Royal Academy supports Hunt's report to William Michael Rossetti on 2 September 1852 that Stephens 'is drawing for the life at the R.A!!!'⁶ Stephens achieved this in January 1853.⁷ For the time being, and in the wake of his defeated efforts to complete a serious 'picture', he decided that portraiture was the best means to regain his confidence.

Painting Portraits

Stephens's correspondence in the early 1850s is filled with references to portraits planned or in progress, dispelling the notion that he worked solely on the few paintings which have survived. His work as a portraitist has never been discussed by art historians, as it has only become apparent after closely studying his unpublished correspondence. In late May and early June 1852 he painted a

³ Ibid.

⁴ Stephens was offended by Hunt's suggestion that he was wasting his time; Hunt apologised in his next letter for his 'lecturings', and for 'installing myself into the important office of dictator for the fiftieth time'; WHH to FGS, 31 October 1852, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 17–19.

⁵ FGS to WHH, undated (24(?) October 1852), WHHF, Box 1, Folder 6. FGS was writing on a 'Sunday afternoon'; WHH's reply on 31 October (see previous note) was also a Sunday, suggesting a date of 24 October for this letter.

⁶ WHH to WMR, 2 September 1852, ADC, Box 18, Folder 9; Bodleian Library, MS. Facs. d. 277, f. 146. Duval, 'Stephens', 33, incorrectly transcribes this as 'from the life'; it seems to me that there is a distinction between drawing in preparation *for* the life school, rather than *from* it.

⁷ 'Stephens, who has been valiantly attending the last course at the R.A. antique school, has had his heroism crowned with success: he is at length admitted a student of the life school'; *PRBJ*, 99 (17–22 January 1853).

likeness of one Thomas Noton.⁸ In September 1852 he was commissioned by a Mr and Mrs Smith to paint a portrait of their young son.⁹ These clients may have approached him after seeing his painting of his stepmother Dorothy in the RA exhibition earlier that year (Fig. 50). The portrait, which has never been discussed in any detail, no longer survives except as a monochrome reproduction from 1920.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is worthy of some attention. It was Stephens's first exhibited work, executed in accordance with the unidealised and highly detailed style of Pre-Raphaelite portraiture.

Dorothy Mary Stephens appeared in the 1852 exhibition, No. 231, titled simply *Portrait*.¹¹ It was placed in the East Room, near the ceiling.¹² In the same room were Millais's *Emily Patmore* (1851; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) and Charles Allston Collins's landscape *May, in the Regent's Park*. Nearby, in the West Room, was Madox Brown's *Jesus Washing Peter's Feet*, for which Stephens had modelled the previous year. Alexander Munro's marble sculpture *Paolo and Francesca*, and Woolner's portrait medallions of Thomas Carlyle and William Wordsworth also appeared before the public. The star attractions, however, were *A Huguenot* and *Ophelia* by Millais, and *The Hireling Shepherd* by Hunt. These easily overshadowed *Dorothy Stephens*, which did not attract the interest of any critics. One reviewer in the *Athenaeum* observed that '[i]n this Exhibition, the Pre-Raphaelites, as they are called, attract great attention', before going on to describe the aforementioned paintings by Millais, Hunt, Collins and Brown.¹³ Stephens was not mentioned.

The photograph of the portrait (Fig. 50) gives an indication of Stephens's commitment to the Pre-Raphaelite style of the early 1850s: finely painted details and a close observation of individual personality are combined with an unusual air of 'detachment', as Basil Taylor has termed it.¹⁴ The portrait is both direct in the frontal placement of the sitter, and distant because of her blank expression, her gaze directed just over the viewer's shoulder. The objects around her suggest a domestic narrative: there is an open sewing box on the table beside her and a white cloth spread on her lap, perhaps to be mended, but she has not yet picked up the needle and thread and begun her

⁸ Appendix 1, No. 13.

⁹ Appendix 1, No. 14.

¹⁰ Manson 1920, Plate 4. Details of the portrait's apparent destruction are given in Appendix 1, No. 12.

¹¹ *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts. The Eighty-Fourth* (London: 1852), 14. The index lists Stephens's address as 59 Walcot Place, Kennington Road.

¹² Pop-up diagram of the hang of the 1852 exhibition in the Royal Academy Archive, RAA/SEC/23/1/5.

¹³ 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* no. 1282 (22 May 1852): 581–83.

¹⁴ Taylor, 'F. G. Stephens', 172.

work. Manson described the painting's colour scheme in 1920, beginning with the 'crimson' armchair:

[Dorothy] is wearing a black dress and white cap with blue ribbons and an orange apron: a white cloth is in her lap: to the left is a small brown table with an open needlework-box; background, a green wall-paper, and, to the right, part of a mantel-piece and a corner of the gold frame of a mirror.¹⁵

The paired combinations of red and green, blue and orange and black and white playing off against each other must have been striking, although it is impossible to discern this from the colourless photograph which has been left to us. Taylor also draws comparisons with Millais's 'concentrated, intense' portraits of the Wyatt family and Hunt's *New College Cloisters*, a portrait of John David Jenkins, which was commenced in June 1852 (Fig. 51).¹⁶ Stephens might also have had in mind Millais's watercolour study of James and Mary Wyatt from 1848 (Fig. 52) in portraying Dorothy in three-quarters length, seated in an armchair beside a table and facing the viewer with an emotionally illegible expression.

Stephens's portrait is highly Pre-Raphaelite, in that he painted each element in the composition with the same preciseness as the principal subject of the picture, Dorothy herself. Even in the reproduction, we can see that the artist took time to capture the reflection of the sewing box sitting on the polished wooden table, the starched folds of the white cloth on Dorothy's lap and the worn texture of the leather chairback with equal attentiveness. As in Hunt's *New College Cloisters*, Millais's portraits of Emily Patmore and Thomas Combe (1850) and Collinson's 1850 portrait of William Bennett, the pictorial space is compressed, pushing Dorothy forwards almost to the picture plane. The sewing box and polished tabletop were probably suggested by Millais's *Mrs James Wyatt Jr and her Daughter Sarah* (Fig. 71), and like Millais Stephens was informed by Northern Renaissance examples such as the Holbein portrait which he had copied two years earlier.

Encouraged by the 1852 exhibition, Stephens painted a portrait of his father Septimus (Fig. 53). This was commenced before 29 November 1852, when D. G. Rossetti reported seeing 'a portrait which Stephens is painting of his father, and which is almost as surprising an advance on former productions as [Thomas] Seddon's landscape'.¹⁷ Stephens was still working on it in January 1853, and

¹⁵ Manson 1920, notes for Plate 4.

¹⁶ Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:155.

¹⁷ DGR to WMR, in *CDGR*, 1:209.

had finished it by mid-April, when he sent it to the RA for the exhibition.¹⁸ The painting was evidently rejected, but on Hunt's advice he submitted it again the following year, when it was finally accepted.¹⁹ It appeared in the 1854 exhibition, No. 1330, once again simply titled *Portrait*.²⁰ Stephens commented to Hunt's father that 'they have hung it on the line in the Octagon room, in the dark'.²¹ This was a mixed blessing, for although it was an achievement to be hung 'on the line', the Octagon Room in the National Gallery was notorious among artists and critics for its very poor lighting. 'There is a condemned cell in Trafalgar Square which may be described as an *oubliette*', *Fraser's Magazine* declared in 1852, 'into which works are thrust and forgotten. [...] the Octagon Room is neither more nor less than a verdict of condemnation upon the unfortunate productions we find imprisoned there in darkness, or in that dubious twilight which is worse than darkness'.²²

It seems appropriate that *Septimus Stephens* was 'thrust' into a twilight 'cell' and 'forgotten'. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, Septimus himself had been in and out of debtor's prison since the 1830s, and the portrait vanished into obscurity after the 1854 exhibition.²³ Viewers of *Septimus Stephens* in 1854 would not have detected any of this unrest in the portrait itself. Septimus is seated in a relaxed pose in a leather armchair (the same that appears in *Dorothy Stephens*) beside a table piled with books – perhaps Stephens was attempting to present his father as a man with scholarly leanings. Manson once again described the painting's colour palette:

A full-length figure, seated in a red arm-chair facing right: he has rather long grey hair and side whiskers. He is wearing a black evening dress with a black stock tie; to the right, a table with magenta cloth and books: background, dark green wall-paper with a green curtain to the right.²⁴

The magenta tablecloth and red armchair juxtaposed with the black and green tones show Stephens's understanding of complementary colours, as opposed to the jarring colour palette of *Dorothy Stephens*

¹⁸ 'Stephens is doing a portrait of his father'; *PRBJ*, 98 (January 1853). 'Stephens has sent a portrait of his father [to the RA]'; DGR to TW, 16 April 1853, in *CDGR*, 1:245.

¹⁹ 'I have sent, according to William's advice, my portrait of my father to the R.A.'; FGS to WHH's father William, undated (May 1854), WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁰ *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts. The Eighty-Sixth* (London: 1854), 49. The index lists FGS's address as 97 Lupus Street, Pimlico.

²¹ Same letter as note 407.

²² 'Art and the Royal Academy', *Fraser's Magazine* (August 1852): 229. Walter Deverell experienced similar disappointment when his painting of *The Mock Marriage of Orlando and Rosalind* was, in his words, 'disgracefully hung – the most insulting position in the Octagon Room', at the exhibition in 1853; quoted in Mary Lutyens, 'Walter Howell Deverell', in Parris, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, 90.

²³ For a full explanation of the portrait's condition, see Appendix 1, No. 16. The last mention of *Septimus Stephens* was in 1981, when it was put up for auction at Sotheby's, Belgravia, but did not sell.

²⁴ Manson 1920, notes for Plate 3.

(although it is impossible to confirm this without the original paintings for comparison). At some point in 1853, Stephens informed Hunt that he had ‘got up a wonderful amount of enthusiasm about color [sic], this is a new freak’.²⁵ His admission to the Life School in January 1853 would have perfected his skills of drawing from a real human model, and *Septimus Stephens* exhibits a careful specificity of anatomy and setting. He did not idealise his father; another painter might not have included the stray hairs straggling awkwardly across Septimus’s forehead. Other artists also might have viewed the light gleaming on the polished leather chair as irrelevant to the central subject, yet Stephens has painted these peripheral details as thoroughly as the sitter himself. From the photograph it is possible to discern the rumpled texture of Septimus’s jacket, and the rectilinear patterns of the rug on the floor which contrast with the rounded chairback and the arch of the canvas itself.

Stephens probably intended *Septimus Stephens* to advertise his capabilities as a portraitist, and this strategy seems to have worked. After the 1854 exhibition he received more commissions, informing Hunt on 24 June that he had ‘no less than five portraits in hand’.²⁶ One of his sitters was his friend, the surgeon Dr Thomas Bramah Diplock, who had introduced Stephens ‘into a whole avenue of new acquaintances, [...] from whom I may expect some profit in the way of portraits, having made one or two amongst them with considerable applause’.²⁷ Another of these likenesses, Stephens explained to Hunt on 4 August, he had copied from a daguerreotype, ‘and tho’ extremely unsatisfactory as a work of Art [it] has enraptured the Lady who gave me the commission, [...] and all her Friends who seem to look upon me as a kind of wizard, to paint a portrait of one I never saw’.²⁸ D. G. Rossetti had written to him back in February about this commission, helping to explain why Stephens never saw the person whose likeness he was painting:

[Margaretta Deverell told me about] a portrait which somebody wants, & Walter D[everell] was going to do before his death. It is to be got up on the strength of a daguerreotype & wild enthusiasm, the great original having been snatched from a desolated world. As I believe you have once or twice done things of this kind, I thought I would write to you, and if you like you could propose to Miss Deverell to undertake it.²⁹

Rossetti continued that the patron was willing to pay £15 for the memento portrait, to be painted from

²⁵ This letter is incomplete, but the year ‘53’ has been added in pencil by a later hand; WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁶ FGS to WHH, 24 June 1854, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷ For the portrait of Diplock, see Appendix 1, No. 22.

²⁸ FGS to WHH, 4 August 1854, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁹ DGR to FGS, undated (February 1854); *CDGR*, 1:325–26. FGS attended to Deverell as he lay on his deathbed and drew a ‘life-size bust in chalk’ of him shortly before he died on 2 February 1854; Appendix 1, No. 21. FGS later told WMR that he ‘finished what few, very few they were, commissions he [Deverell] had’; FGS to WMR, 16 December 1895, ADC, Box 14, Folder 9.

a photograph of ‘the too early lost’. Unfortunately, neither Rossetti nor Stephens gave the patron’s name, so it has not yet been possible to trace the portrait. In the end, the lady was so delighted with Stephens’s handiwork that she paid him £18 18s and passed him another portrait request, possibly for the deceased sitter’s brother.³⁰ Painting likenesses therefore brought in the necessary ‘tin’ to help the artist’s struggling family.

Further insights into Stephens’s techniques are afforded by a small, unfinished portrait of his friend, the antiquary Charles Bridger (Fig. 3).³¹ When the Tate acquired the work in 1932 it was given a date of 1850.³² However, a letter to Hunt on 14 November 1855 confirms that Stephens was working on it in that year: ‘I have completed the head of a portrait of Bridger, which remains incomplete on account of his mysterious disappearance. He had been in want of money and gave your “St Agnes Eve” to a friend as security in advance of cash’.³³ It remained in Stephens’s possession, with only the head completed. The painting was in oils and measured just 5 by 4½ inches. Other Pre-Raphaelite portraits were equally small, such as Millais’s *Emily Patmore*, Madox Brown’s *William Michael Rossetti* (1856; Wightwick Manor, West Midlands) and the likenesses of Christina Rossetti painted by John Brett (1857; private collection) and her brother Dante Gabriel (1848; private collection).³⁴ These examples offer useful points of comparison with Stephens’s painting, which also presents the sitter’s head and shoulders in a tightly cropped format. Bridger’s features are delicately modelled, the light playing across his face from the left to reveal a warm, friendly expression. As a memento of a friendship between artist and sitter it can also be compared with Hunt’s intimate oil portrait of Stephens (Fig. 11). Bridger’s hair, moustache and beard are finely painted, demonstrating a fidelity and precision typical of Pre-Raphaelite practices in the 1850s.

Judging from the photograph, Stephens used a canvas support. After the portrait was stolen,

³⁰ ‘The price of the first [the copied daguerreotype] had been agreed upon with Deverell at £15.15, this I adopted without anything being said on the subject, and on her asking me what she had to pay I stated the case. She spoke very civilly and gave a cheque for £18.18’; same letter as note 436.

³¹ As was shown in the introduction, the portrait was stolen from Wolverhampton Art Gallery while on loan from the Tate in 1960, and was presumably destroyed by the vandal. I am grateful to Alison Smith, formerly Lead Curator of British Art to 1900 at Tate Britain, for sending me the reproduction of the portrait.

³² A list dated 4 October 1931 in the H. F. Stephens bequest file, TG 4/4/146/1, Tate Archives, describes it as ‘Portrait of C. Bridger – Oil 1850’.

³³ FGS to WHH, 14 November 1855, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2. The painting by WHH was *The Eve of St Agnes (The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro)* (1848; Guildhall Art Gallery, London), which Bridger had purchased in 1848 using £60 from the Art Union lottery.

³⁴ The last two portraits are reproduced in Owens and Tromans, *Christina Rossetti*, 49 and 65.

the *Birmingham Post* reported that Bridger was depicted ‘wearing a white suit’, but it appears that this was simply the area of canvas left unpainted.³⁵ We can infer from this that Stephens applied his pigments on a white ground, which accords with the technique he shared with his fellow Pre-Raphaelite Brothers (he used two base layers containing lead white and chalk for *Mother and Child*).³⁶ He began to add an additional, thinner layer of paint around the head, presumably for a coloured background, but this was not continued. Pentimenti just beneath the chin and the left portion of hair show that Stephens slightly raised the position of the head into the centre of the canvas at an early stage. The paint surface had apparently begun to crack by the time the Tate acquired it, and other areas had fallen away entirely.

Writing to Hunt on 14 November 1855, Stephens complained that ‘[b]eyond a few portraits, these far too few for my necessities, now greatly increased by home demands I have [...] nothing to do. The very portraits have fallen off now’. Although none of Stephens’s painted portraits have survived, there is the possibility that others by him are still in existence in private or family collections.

Stephens as Hunt’s Studio Assistant

Since the late 1840s, Stephens had been assisting Hunt with his artworks. This included fetching canvases and pigments and producing sketches which Hunt could work up into finished paintings. A number of early letters provide an insight into these activities. A brief, undated note requests Stephens to be at Hunt’s studio in Chelsea ‘as early as you can’; ‘I have ordered a canvass [sic] of the proportions required’, and Stephens would be working on it.³⁷ On another occasion Hunt asked his friend: ‘Can you come over tomorrow morning? If so be here early to breakfast so that I may impart my desires respecting your days [sic] task – to consist principally of varnishing’.³⁸ A careful reading of the following note (also undated) reveals that Stephens was required to assist with one of Hunt’s

³⁵ *Birmingham Post* (23 February 1960), front page.

³⁶ Anna Southall, ‘Frederick George Stephens: *Mother and Child*’, in *Completing the Picture: Materials and Techniques of Twenty-Six Paintings in the Tate Gallery*, ed. Stephen Hackney (London: Tate Publishing, 1982), 44–46.

³⁷ Undated, ‘Saturday’, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, f. 145; it is addressed from Long Acre, where the colourman Charles Roberson’s shop was located.

³⁸ Undated, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, f. 153.

oil sketches: 'I find myself compelled to ask you to bring the case over here for I shall have to work on the sketch this morning, and its wetness will make it impossible for me to carry it to your place'.³⁹ Hunt had been working on the sketch thus far, and wanted Stephens to continue it; because the paint was still wet, Stephens would have to bring a case with him to Hunt's studio in order to carry it back home so that he could do his part. The picture could be the replica of either *The Hireling Shepherd* or *The Light of the World* by Hunt, both of which Stephens is known to have helped with. Judith Bronkhurst has given a detailed account of these works in her catalogue raisonné on Hunt, concluding that Stephens's work on the small version of *The Hireling Shepherd* 'appears to have been confined to the early stages', with Hunt building upon the outlines of the design which Stephens had sketched out.⁴⁰ I would agree with this, as the replica is highly finished and is closer to Hunt's style of vivid outdoor painting. However, *The Light of the World* bears closer inspection.

This teacher/pupil dynamic was not unusual for the PRB. As we saw in Chapter 2, Stephens briefly assumed the role of teacher for D. G. Rossetti in 1849, tutoring him in perspective and assisting him with *Ecce Ancilla Domini!*, but this was not a long-term arrangement. The letters quoted at the beginning of this chapter show that Hunt took it upon himself to guide Stephens's progress. Stephens's financial difficulties were also a contributing factor, and Hunt was able to pay him for his work. Rossetti had previously been a pupil of Madox Brown, painting copies for him and mixing his pigments, while Hunt earned extra money by copying a painting by William Dyce.

The partial attribution of the small replica of Hunt's *The Light of the World* (now in Manchester Art Gallery; Fig. 54) to Stephens was first suggested by Jeremy Maas in 1984.⁴¹ Maas had acquired Stephens's personal copy of his pamphlet *William Holman Hunt and His Works*, extensively annotated by Stephens in the margins.⁴² The pamphlet was produced to accompany the exclusive exhibition of Hunt's *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* at Ernest Gambart's German Gallery in 1860. Pencilled at the bottom of page 31 is the following remark in relation to the 'small

³⁹ Undated, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, f. 150.

⁴⁰ Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:160–61 (*The Hireling Shepherd*) and 162–63 (*The Light of the World*). *PRBJ*, 99 (17–22 January 1853) records that FGS 'is engaged in making a finished sketch in oils from Hunt's *Hireling Shepherd*'.

⁴¹ Jeremy Maas, *Holman Hunt and the Light of the World* (London: Scholar, 1984), 50–54. The replica is inscribed with WHH's initials in the lower right corner.

⁴² [Frederic George Stephens], *William Holman Hunt and His Works: A Memoir of the Artist's Life, with Description of His Pictures* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1860). I am grateful to Rupert Maas for allowing me to examine the original pamphlet in the Maas Gallery on 20 October 2017.

replica' of *The Light of the World*: 'of which I, F.G.S., painted 99 parts' (Fig. 55). The handwriting throughout the book is recognisable as Stephens's own, from much later in his life; a remark at the end of the pamphlet indicates he annotated it in 1906, not long before his death.⁴³ Although the annotations are written variously in pencil and in ink, suggesting that they were not all done in one sitting, they clearly belong to the same period, perhaps as late as early 1900s. Maas concludes that '[i]n all probability Stephens had substantially finished off and made into a picture what had been merely a working sketch by Hunt'.⁴⁴ For Bronkhurst, however, the fact that Stephens is likely to have made his annotation after the publication of Hunt's autobiography, *Pre-Raphaelite and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, in 1905, is evidence that it stemmed from his 'increased antagonism' towards his former friend – a kind of kneejerk reaction to Hunt's slanderous remarks about him (as mentioned in Chapter 1).⁴⁵ Bronkhurst concludes that Stephens 'definitely' worked on the replica in 1853–4, 'and possibly also after Hunt's return from the East in 1856. His part in the picture is, however, certainly less than he claimed'.

It is worth briefly considering Stephens's '99 parts' claim in the context of his overall reaction to Hunt's *Pre-Raphaelitism*. For example, he did take steps to refute the description of the Trinity House restoration project which he and Hunt undertook in 1850, writing to W. M. Rossetti on 5 June 1906:

[Hunt] says, vol. i. [page] 228, that I undertook to do the 'flat shadings' on the blue ground of the pictures on the walls and ceilings of the Trinity House. The truth is that I repaired the draperies, foliage and chubby amarini in [John Francis] Rigaud's pictures there, not the 'shadings' only which would be a mechanic's task. This is a spiteful deprecation, with only part of the truth.⁴⁶

In fairness to Hunt, it would have been difficult for him to remember such a minor detail from an event which took place over fifty years earlier. What matters is that Stephens was adamant about being properly credited for his efforts. Yet he never made a claim about the *Light of the World* replica in public and seems not to have disclosed it to anyone (at least in his letters). Was he then writing in his pamphlet more for his own satisfaction, knowing that nothing could be done about the matter after

⁴³ 'A special exhibition of the works of Mr H. Hunt was held at the Leicester Galleries, London, in 1906, and, in the same year, removed to Manchester'; Stephens, *Holman Hunt*, 83, FGS's annotated copy in the Maas Gallery.

⁴⁴ Maas, *Holman Hunt*, 50, 54.

⁴⁵ Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:163.

⁴⁶ ADC, Box 14, Folder 10, referring to *PR&PRB*, 1:228–29. See Appendix 1, No. 34, for more details of the restoration.

so much time had passed? (The replica had been in the private collection of Lord Tweedmouth since 1886.) The wording of the annotation – ‘I, F.G.S.’ – has the tone of a legal declaration made in secret.

No attention has been paid to Stephens’s other annotations in his pamphlet, which provide a broader context for his claim about painting ‘99 parts’ of the replica. His retrospective comments are generally calm and factual in tone. He updated the provenances of the paintings by Hunt mentioned in his book – names of subsequent owners, dates of sales – and corrected typographical errors. Looking back at what he had written about Hunt’s *Rienzi*, Stephens responded in the margin that the painting had been:

Resold at Mr Gibbons’s sale, June 27, 1863, for 168*l*, to ‘G. Earl’. It was then much cracked, had faded. The head of R[ienzi] was a perfect likeness of D.G. Rossetti. Resold, with F. W. Cosens’s pictures, May 17, 1890, for 157*l*. It had been so much repainted as to be completely spoiled.⁴⁷

Elsewhere, Stephens fixed the spelling of Hunt’s ‘the “Awakened Conscience”’ using proofreading marks in the margins, a practice learnt from checking decades-worth of proofs before publication.⁴⁸

Whether he was doing this solely for his own satisfaction, or was aware the pamphlet would survive for posterity, is difficult to determine.

Bearing in mind these annotations, it does seem that Stephens’s remark about the *Light of the World* replica was made less in anger, and more as a simple statement of his own part in its production, albeit with an air of regret that he did not receive the recognition he felt he deserved. After all, the original text of the pamphlet declares that ‘a small *replica* thereof, which was sent to New York, excited a *furor* there far beyond any picture that had been seen in America, where it was purchased for probably the greatest price yet given for any painting on that side of the Atlantic’.⁴⁹ To complement this, nearby on the same page Stephens observes that Hunt’s original version of *The Light of the World* (Fig. 56) ‘is now in Keble College, Oxford’, and records the price which Thomas Combe paid for it – ‘in Aug. 1858 for £400’. Mary Susan Duval has contributed her perspective on the issue: ‘If Stephens had wished to mention his work on the replica in the 1860 pamphlet, Hunt, who carefully vetted the text, obviously felt otherwise. His widow, Edith, with the aid of a pair of

⁴⁷ Stephens, *Holman Hunt*, 17, FGS’s annotated copy in the Maas Gallery. WHH retouched *Rienzi* in 1886; Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:132.

⁴⁸ Stephens, *Holman Hunt*, 32, FGS’s annotated copy in the Maas Gallery.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32–33. The replica ‘created “a great sensation” in New York in October 1857. John Wolfe [...] made Hunt a generous offer of £300 for it by 11 February of the following year. The artist tried unsuccessfully to raise this to the original asking price of £350’; Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 163.

scissors, later purged from Hunt's correspondence with [Thomas] Combe all references to the picture'.⁵⁰ The first assertion is supported by Stephens's statement on the pamphlet's title page (Fig. 57): 'All the proofs of this text were, before its publication, submitted to Mr W.H. Hunt and thoroughly examined by him'. There is a cynical undertone to 'thoroughly examined' – a jab at Hunt's controlling personality. It sets the tone for Stephens's annotations, which offer his personal perspective on Hunt's work, freed from the latter's influence.

Documentation aside, there is the painting itself. In 1963, without any knowledge of Stephens's claim, Mark Roskill pointed out the noticeable differences between Hunt's original version at Keble College (Fig. 56) and the Manchester replica (Fig. 54). He concluded that 'the divergences between them are already sufficient to suggest a certain sheer clumsiness and inefficiency in Hunt's abilities as a copyist of his own creations'.⁵¹ Jeremy Maas built upon this by pointing out that '[t]he worst painted area' in the replica is the face and neck of Christ: 'the flesh is dull, grey, badly articulated and lacking in detail; the painting of the hair and beard [...] [is] merely crude; [...] the area between the clasp and the beard is almost devoid of detail and painted in a kind of grey monochrome'.⁵² A side-by-side comparison of these areas in the original and replica (Figs. 58, 59) reinforces Maas's observations, and demonstrates that the latter is more crudely painted, lacking the sculptural modelling of Christ's facial features in the original. His beard in Fig. 59 is rounder in shape, exposing the poorly defined neck area which is covered in Fig. 58. The hazy translucency of the halo in the Keble version – through which can be glimpsed the leaves and branches behind Christ's head – is not translated into the replica, where the halo appears, rather less subtly, as a solid golden disc. Unhelpfully for Stephens, the replica's deficiencies serve as proof of his workmanship.

⁵⁰ Duval, 'Stephens', 35.

⁵¹ Mark Roskill, 'Holman Hunt's Differing Versions of the "Light of the World"', *Victorian Studies* 6, no. 3 (March 1963): 233, quoted in Maas, *Holman Hunt*, 54.

⁵² Maas, *Holman Hunt*, 55.

Domestic Tragedy: *Mother and Child*

In his second essay for the *Germ*, Stephens asserted that artists should look to ‘the poetry of the things about [them]’ for inspiration, also arguing that potential subjects for poems and paintings ‘may be seen in the streets every day’.⁵³ Some years later, in an article published in the *Crayon* in 1858, he declared that an artist who has ‘struck out and invented a new subject for himself, [...] doubles his merit, by becoming in some sense a poet as well as a painter’. He continued:

[I]t seems that in the choice of subject a preference should be given to those which are more immediately connected with our own times, not only as being of more direct interest to us, but as handing down to future generations, for his study, the actions and aspect of men as they are and as they appear to us.⁵⁴

Millais’s recent painting *The Rescue* (1855), depicting a fireman rescuing three children from a burning house, was commended for being ‘perfectly novel, perfectly real, and perfectly true’ in this respect.⁵⁵ The idea of expressing a condition of modern life through a subject imagined by the artist, rather than illustrating a pre-existing literary text, was put into practice in Stephens’s next major painting, now simply titled *Mother and Child* (Fig. 2). In October 1852, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, he had expressed doubts about his ability to ‘attempt a picture’ – something more than a straightforward portrait or study from nature.⁵⁶ However, his admission to the Life School at the RA in January 1853 and the steady stream of portrait commissions gave him a newfound confidence to attempt a work of more substantial originality. After the medievalism of *Morte d’Arthur* and the historical realism of *The Proposal*, both scenes from English literature, he created a painting rooted in contemporary anxieties surrounding the Crimean War which he hoped would be equally ‘novel, real and true’. The picture has been analysed by scholars, but typically within a very wide context of the Crimean War and Victorian society; the picture itself, its production, its formal qualities, its more immediate Pre-Raphaelite context, and its relationship with Stephens’s other paintings, are all points which I will consider here for the first time.

Mother and Child is one of several Pre-Raphaelite paintings from the 1850s depicting women with their children. Some were intended as direct portraits or genre scenes, such as Collinson’s *Mother and Child by a Stile* (ca. 1850) and Millais’s *Eliza Wyatt and her Daughter Sarah* (Fig. 71),

⁵³ Stephens, ‘Modern Giants’, 170.

⁵⁴ Frederic George Stephens, ‘The Idea of a Picture’, *Crayon* 5, no. 3 (March 1858): 64, 66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁵⁶ See present chapter, note 5.

while others, like Stephens's *Mother and Child*, Brown's *Waiting: An English Fireside of 1854–55* (1851–5) and Millais's *Peace Concluded, 1856* (1856), addressed topical social and political issues. Like *The Proposal*, *Mother and Child* depicts a portentous moment in the life of a young woman: the young woman has received a letter bringing news of her husband from the Crimean War – whether of his death, or simply prolonging his absence, is an ambiguity which the painting sustains. She sinks forward in her chair, grasping the arm with one hand. Her infant daughter abandons her toys and slips off the sofa where she has been playing, reaching out towards her mother. These female figures are embedded within an intensively decorated middle-class apartment, a hearthside setting typical in Victorian images of womanhood. The picture demonstrates Stephens's engagement with the problems facing the wives of Crimean soldiers in Victorian society, also perpetuating what Susan P. Casteras has termed 'the ideology of hearthside feminine endurance and perfection'.⁵⁷

Some scholars have viewed *Mother and Child* as Stephens's 'masterpiece'.⁵⁸ Basil Taylor, calling it his 'best' work, admired it as a quintessential example of 'a specifically Pre-Raphaelite way of rendering nature' which became 'a vehicle for something else; the expression of something apart from nature – genuine ideas'.⁵⁹ Stephens no doubt intended the earnestness of his artistic technique, with its fastidious representation of minute detail, to reflect the sincerity of his ideas – a serious theme painted in a careful, thoughtful manner. Yet clarity of execution did not always translate into clarity of expression: art historians failed to recognise the deeper content of Stephens's painting for much of the twentieth century, even after it entered the Tate collection in 1932. Neither Taylor's article nor Robin Ironside and John Gere's catalogue *Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, both published in 1948, acknowledge the painting's symbolism or social-historical context. In 1977 James Harding described it as 'an apparently happy domestic scene fraught with undertones of tragedy'; however, while hinting that the mother is 'stunned by the news contained in a letter she holds in her hand', no attempt was made to deduce what this tragic news might be.⁶⁰ Matthew Paul Lalumia finally made the case for

⁵⁷ Susan P. Casteras, 'The unsettled hearth: P. H. Calderon's "*Lord! Thy Will Be Done*" and the problematics of women in Victorian interiors', in *Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*, ed. Ellen Harding (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 149–172.

⁵⁸ 'Of the very few surviving pictures by Stephens, [*Mother and Child*] is undoubtedly the best'; Ironside and Gere, *Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, 45.

⁵⁹ Taylor, 'Stephens', 174.

⁶⁰ James Harding, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Academy Editions, 1977), 37.

Mother and Child as ‘a topical picture inspired by the Crimean War’ in 1984.⁶¹ This interpretation was upheld in the Tate’s *Pre-Raphaelites* exhibition which included Stephens’s painting, also in 1984. Robin Hamlyn noted in the catalogue that the toys on the sofa, the wooden lion and the hussar on horseback, symbolically convey ‘a commentary on the war between Britain and Russia in the Crimea’.⁶² More recently, the doll perching precariously atop the lion has been seen to represent Queen Victoria, and the tiny bellows alluding to ‘the fanning of the flames of war, [...] also to the puffed pride of nationalism’.⁶³ Perhaps Stephens’s intentions were too obscure to be easily discerned, although, as was the case with most of his work, it is more likely that the painting simply did not attract enough scholarly interest.

In March 1854, in response to Russia’s attack on the Ottoman Empire in Turkey the previous year, Britain, in alliance with France, Turkey and Sardinia, declared war and prepared its soldiers for battle in the Crimean Peninsula. Stephens was particularly concerned about the conflict, keeping himself informed. On 4 August 1854 he wrote to Hunt (who was then abroad) with a lengthy account of the present situation, lamenting that the Russian forces ‘have entirely gutted the Danube’ and noting the war’s constant presence in the newspapers.⁶⁴ In November the following year he reported that ‘[t]he taking of Sebastopol and battles since have produced much satisfaction and renewed hope’ among the British public.⁶⁵ This hope would eventually be realised, for the war came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Paris four months later on 30 March 1856. We have seen Stephens becoming preoccupied with a particular subject before, when he was painting *Morte d’Arthur* and writing his Arthurian poem in 1849 (discussed in Chapter 2). Yet this was not an antiquarian interest, but one closely concerned with current affairs.⁶⁶

Unlike Stephens’s earlier paintings, there are no direct references to *Mother and Child* in the extant primary sources. A possible clue may be found in one of his unpublished letters to Hunt, begun

⁶¹ Matthew Paul Lalumia, *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), 98–99.

⁶² Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 127.

⁶³ Upstone, *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, 67.

⁶⁴ WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁶⁵ 14 November 1855, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁶⁶ Even after the war ended, FGS was anxious to know when the British troops would return safely home; William Carew Hazlitt to FGS, undated, Friday evening (‘4/7/56’ added in pencil), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 83, ff. 76–77: ‘The fact is that it is not yet known when the 34th will leave the Crimea – the only point which seems to be well established is that they are [...] even the best informed are at fault as to their movements’.

on 4 March 1855, which it is worth quoting at length:

In my last I spoke of a little picture I was painting[,] this progresses very well[,] I have been ever since painting on the background and have considerable doubts of getting it done in time for the R.A. but of this I am less anxious because I have had an offer of [pewter?] for it!!!! Which astounding circumstance occurred thus. The Surgeon, whose portrait I painted, and whom I have mentioned in previous letters[,] asked me when we were smoking together what I thought of asking for it. I explained the difficulty of getting a price for a first picture and various other objections to asking a high one, and told him I thought of putting on it £30 (the canvas is 25 x 19) this took his breath away and the next day he said that if I would exhibit it at £60, and failed to sell it at that price, he would give me £30 himself[,] of course I agreed and thought myself in luck. W. Rossetti tells me Smallfield is painting on the same subject, it is sufficiently obvious and commonplace certainly, and I dare say these two will not be the only ones. I have mentioned selling this to no one, do not you.⁶⁷

When Stephens resumed the letter seven days later, he feared that his painting would not be ready in time for submission to the RA, ‘however I shall try my best’; he also reported that Walter Howell Deverell’s sister Margaretta ‘is sitting to me for a head’. In addition, he sent Hunt copies of the *Times* from 6–10 March containing ‘an account of a fresh batter between Turks and Russians at Eupatoria and also reports of the progress of the inquiry into the causes of the suffering of the Army before Sebastopol which excites [...] the greatest interest here’.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the earlier letter by Stephens, in which he would have described the ‘little picture’ and its content in more detail, has not survived. However, judging by the canvas measurements which he notes, the painting must be *Mother and Child*, which measures around 25 inches (64.1 cm) in width and 18.5 inches (47 cm) in height. The considerable time he had spent painting the background testifies to the painstaking detail of the Tate picture, close inspection of which reveals a wealth of carefully recorded visual phenomena – each of the trinkets on the mantelpiece presents a polished, glassy surface which catches and reflects the natural light filling the room through the window. Although Stephens did not directly describe the subject, his comment that it was ‘obvious and commonplace’ presumably refers to the mundane domestic setting of *Mother and Child*. That he anticipated that his and Frederick Smallfield’s paintings would ‘not be the only ones’ to address a particular theme in that year’s exhibition would imply that it was something of topical importance.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Stephens described it as his ‘first picture’, recalling his doubts in October 1852 that he did not yet feel able to ‘attempt a picture’ – a work with a more profound subject matter

⁶⁷ Letter dated from 4–11 March 1855, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁶⁸ The Battle of Eupatoria in the western Crimea took place on 17 February 1855.

⁶⁹ However, the paintings which Smallfield did exhibit at the RA in 1855 do not suggest anything radical: a portrait; a small genre subject, *An Embroidery Lesson*; a depiction of *Hamlet Questioning Ophelia*.

than a straightforward portrait or study from nature.⁷⁰ Ultimately, the surgeon, Thomas Bramah Diplock (who was mentioned earlier in this chapter), did not buy the painting.⁷¹

It is unclear from Stephens's letter whether Margaretta Devereell was modelling for *Mother and Child* or another work. She did write to him, apparently in 1856, agreeing to sit to him, also remarking: 'I fear you will think I am looking too ill for your picture'.⁷² This suggests something more than a straightforward portrait. It is possible that the picture in question was *Mother and Child*. After Walter Devereell's death in February 1854, his sisters presented Stephens with a sketch by their brother which is presumed to represent Margaretta and Maria Devereell, the former kissing the latter on the cheek (Fig. 60). From this, it is possible to see a resemblance with the woman in *Mother and Child*. Margaretta was accustomed to being an artist's model, having also sat to her brother for the figure of Rosalind in his painting *The Mock Marriage of Orlando and Rosalind* (standing on the far right).⁷³ However, as will be explained shortly, there is also evidence to suggest that Annie Miller was Stephens's model.

Stephens apparently continued working on his painting into 1856. After speaking with him on 15 March 1856, Madox Brown noted in his diary: 'Stevens [sic] picture a progress evidently'.⁷⁴ The month before, on 22 February, Collinson had written to inform him of the requirements for exhibiting at the Portland Gallery in London. Collinson concluded by saying he 'should like to see [Stephens's] picture very much'.⁷⁵ Having failed to sell his painting to Diplock, and uncertain of its being accepted at the RA, Stephens was intending to exhibit it elsewhere. On 5 April, Charles Bridger asked

⁷⁰ See present chapter, note 5.

⁷¹ Confirmed in a letter from FGS to WHH, 14 November 1855, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2: 'Diplock the surgeon whom I mentioned as having made me the offer for the little picture has married, he and I are great friends'. There are 20 letters from Diplock and his wife Eleanor to FGS and RCS, ca. 1862–1904, in FGSP, MS. Don. e. 59, ff. 114–47, which reveal the close friendship between the families.

⁷² FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, ff. 12–13: 'I have been very unwell indeed lately, but will endeavour to sit to you on Monday, and will be with you in the afternoon about two'. The letter is undated except for 'Tuesday', but '4/3/56' has been added by a later hand. Given FGS's reference to Margaretta sitting to him in his letter of 11 March 1855 (see note 67), her letter may date from that year instead; 11 March was a Sunday, so it may have been written on Tuesday 6th, with Monday 12th the intended day for the sitting.

⁷³ Lutyens, 'Devereell', 88.

⁷⁴ Virginia Surtees, ed., *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 167. Brown misspells Stephens's name throughout his diary. Surtees speculates that the picture in question was *Morte d'Arthur*, but this seems unlikely given that FGS had not worked on this painting since 1849.

⁷⁵ FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, f. 7: 'I have tried several individuals connected with the Portland Gallery, respecting its rules, & all that I can derive from them, is [...] that in some cases the artist is permitted to send in his frame without the picture, on the days appointed for sending in pictures – but he must take care to finish his picture & send it in before the varnishing day'.

Stephens: ‘What about the picture?’⁷⁶ While this might refer to the unfinished portrait Stephens had painted of him in 1855, described earlier in this chapter, it could also be *Mother and Child* which the artist was still trying to finish. Sometime after this date he set the painting to one side indefinitely, perhaps feeling that his painting had lost its immediate relevance once the Crimean War had ended. D. G. Rossetti wrote to him in 1857 asking if he had considering ‘sending your painting’ to the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition in Russell Place, although Stephens did not do so.

The painting’s careful execution confirms Stephens’s commitment to the style and techniques of early Pre-Raphaelite painting even after the PRB itself had dissolved at the end of 1853. As Elizabeth Pettejohn has pointed out, the weakest area of the painting is the girl’s arm and fingers, which appears stiff and curiously flat despite her dynamic pose.⁷⁷ Despite being unfinished in some areas (notably the sofa), the painting is carefully signed with Stephens’s monogram in the lower-right corner. Anna Southall’s technical analysis of the painting in 1982 shows that Stephens sketched out his composition on a dried priming layer of lead white before applying his paints with ‘a small (probably sable) brush’.⁷⁸ Looking at the painting unframed reveals that objects such as the ornament on the far left of the mantelpiece, the top of the chair back and the carved wall sconce beside it had been fully sketched in, suggesting that Stephens originally intended to fill the entire canvas to its four corners. The distinctive arched top was therefore probably an afterthought. The mother’s pose may have been inspired by Millais’s drawing *Retribution* of 1854 (Fig. 61); the positioning of the seated woman’s hands, her left hand grasping the man’s leg and her right hand extended on her lap, is nearly identical to Stephens’s painting.

In its topical subject matter and meticulously painted domestic interior, Stephens’s painting can be closely compared with Brown’s *Waiting: An English Fireside in the Winter of 1854–55*, which was begun in 1851 as a study of the artist’s wife Emma sewing a cap by the fireside with their baby daughter Catherine lying on her lap (Fig. 62). Pertinent to *Mother and Child* is the fact that Brown altered this originally subject-less picture – one without a specific narrative or moral message – between December 1854 and February 1855 by adding a miniature portrait of a soldier and a pile of

⁷⁶ Charles Bridger to FGS, 5 April 1856, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 20.

⁷⁷ Pettejohn, *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 144.

⁷⁸ Southall, ‘Stephens’, 46.

letters to the table on the woman's right. This, along with the title *Waiting*, changed it into a topical depiction of, in Brown's words, 'an officer's wife thinking of him at Sevastopol'.⁷⁹ Although these additions are subtle – the objects that communicate the husband's absence are marginally placed, and only really become clear after the viewer has finished contemplating the central figures – the painting went from being a personalised study of the artist's wife to one that expressed wider concerns for the English women and children who faced the possibility of losing their loved ones in a distant land. The subtitle, *An English Fireside in the Winter of 1854–55*, is specific in its reference to a particular country (England), season (winter) and year, but also generalised in the sense that the fireside could be any in England on a winter's evening, as news of the ongoing Siege of Sebastopol, which lasted for one year from September 1854, reached home from abroad. Still, the cosiness of the scene, deepened by the firelight that bathes the baby's gown, the oil lamp that casts the woman's shadow on the wall, and the palette of deep browns, reds and blacks, suggests warmth and contentment.

We could view *Mother and Child* as an unofficial pendant to *Waiting*, given their shared focus on mother-daughter relationships and their fireside settings. The fire is alight in both paintings; its red glow is visible on the cast iron arch behind the girl in *Mother and Child*. Yet Stephens's painting is an unhappy sequel: where the husband is merely absent in *Waiting* and may possibly return home, in *Mother and Child* he has been obliterated, leaving his wife husbandless, his child fatherless and both of them potentially destitute. Stephens would have known *Waiting* in its original form, at least before the added references to the Crimea, through a second version painted in 1852 when the first version was still being sketched, and which Brown exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1853.⁸⁰ Once completed, the first version, with its added Crimea references, was shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris from May to November 1855, then at the Liverpool Academy in 1856.

Both Stephens and Brown were working amidst anxieties about Britain's role in the Crimea in Victorian literary and visual culture. On 9 December 1854 Tennyson's poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' was first published in the *Examiner*, memorialising the ill-fated charge of a regiment

⁷⁹ Bennett, *Brown*, 1:134; Surtees, *Diary of Ford Madox Brown*, 114 (8 January 1855).

⁸⁰ Bennett, *Brown*, 1:135–36. This second version of *Waiting*, without the Crimea references and with a different sitter for the mother, is now in a private collection.

of British cavalry soldiers against Russian forces during the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October.⁸¹ The poem was revised and reprinted in *Maud, and Other Poems* the following year; the titular dramatic poem, *Maud*, had been composed in 1854 at the outset of the Crimean War and features a hero who, in its third and final part, leaves Britain to fight. The sensation these poems caused has been much discussed by literary scholars.⁸² A few months after the publication of *Maud*, in September 1855, an exhibition of Roger Fenton's 312 photographs documenting the soldiers, battlefields and casualties of the Crimea opened at the Gallery of the Water Colour Society, Pall Mall, to critical acclaim.⁸³ The impact of these photographs on Victorian culture was considerable; for the first time, the reality of war in foreign lands was brought home.⁸⁴

If Stephens and Brown were inspired by the Crimean War as it was happening, Millais was prompted by its end. The full title of his *Peace Concluded, 1856* (Fig. 63) points to the year it was painted and more specifically to its topical subject matter. At first glance, it presents a husband reunited with his wife and children after fighting in the Crimea, the end of which is announced in the copy of the *Times* in his left hand. But the picture's finer details, as well as the exact moral stance Millais was taking in painting it, have been the subject of conflicting interpretations. Michael Hancher summarises the 'official' and 'scandalous' readings of *Peace Concluded*: the former describes a wounded officer recuperating with his family in England after valiant injury in battle; the latter pessimistically portrays him as having 'avoided field duty by pleading spurious domestic excuses – "urgent private affairs" was the common phrase – to obtain undeserved leaves of absence'.⁸⁵ Millais apparently originally intended to make *Urgent Private Affairs* the title, but was forced to alter his cutting portrayal into that of a war hero after the Crimea ended and public sentiment shifted. The

⁸¹ Alfred Tennyson, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', *Examiner* (9 December 1854), 780.

⁸² F. J. Sypher, 'Politics in the Poetry of Tennyson', *Victorian Poetry* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1976), 101–112; Elizabeth A. Francis, 'Tennyson's Political Poetry, 1852–1855', *Victorian Poetry* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1976), 113–123; Stefanie Markovits, 'Giving Voice to the Crimean War: Tennyson's "Charge" and Maud's Battle-Song', *Victorian Poetry* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2009), 481–503.

⁸³ For an account of Fenton's photography expedition to the Crimea in 1855, see Gordon Baldwin, Malcolm R. Daniel and Sarah Greenough, *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 223–26.

⁸⁴ Helen Groth, 'Technological Mediations and the Public Sphere: Roger Fenton's Crimea Exhibition and "The Charge of the Light Brigade"', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2002), 553–570.

⁸⁵ Michael Hancher, "'Urgent Private Affairs": Millais's *Peace Concluded, 1856*', *Burlington Magazine* 133, no. 1061 (August 1991), 499–506.

former, less condemnatory reading appears to have been accepted.⁸⁶

Alison Smith has suggested that Millais might have been influenced by Stephens's *Mother and Child* in choosing a Crimea subject.⁸⁷ However, the two paintings offer contrasting depictions of domestic unity versus domestic tragedy. In Stephens's picture the conflict is at its height; in Millais's that same war has ended. The former portrays a family ruptured, in a moment of crisis; the latter a family united. The circle of intimacy formed by the linked hands and resting heads of the couple at the centre of *Peace Concluded* is disrupted by the atmosphere of tension and separation foregrounded in *Mother and Child* through the distance between parent and daughter. In Millais's painting, children's toys appear once again as emblems of adult conflict: the lion (Britain), the polar bear (Russia), the rooster (France) and the turkey gather together in reconciliation. Whereas the girl in Stephens's picture extends her left arm towards her mother in a gesture of alarm, the girl on the left in Millais's picture proffers a tiny dove with an olive branch in its beak. Stephens's imagery of soldiers and Queen Victoria looks back to Millais's *Eliza Wyatt and her Daughter Sarah* (Fig. 71), which includes a doll of the Queen in official dress and a picture book open at an illustration of men in uniform.

As mentioned earlier, Annie Miller may have modelled for the mother figure. The most concrete piece of evidence is the fact that her name is inscribed in Stephens's hand in the upper-right spandrel of the canvas under the arched picture frame.⁸⁸ The similarities between the mother's face and the portraits of Miller by Hunt in 1853 (Fig. 64), and by Millais in 1854 (Figs. 65–66), are also striking. Hunt embarked on his first painting expedition to the Holy Land on 13 January 1854, effectively leaving Miller in Stephens's care. Stephens had agreed to this arrangement the previous year: as one of Hunt's closest friends he could be trusted to manage the fund of £200 set up for Miller's education, and to send regular reports of her progress.⁸⁹ Hunt had even drawn up a list of trusted artists to whom she could sit without the 'threat' of impropriety: Millais, Augustus Leopold

⁸⁶ Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais*, 108, in which *Peace Concluded* 'presents a wounded officer who has returned home from the Crimea'.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁸ The reproductions of the painting on Tate's website and the Google Art Project show it unframed, which enabled me to make the discovery.

⁸⁹ Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandfather: His Wives and Loves* (London: Hamilton, 1969), 97; Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*, 62.

Egg and Boyce, among others, and last of all Stephens himself. Consequently, on 25 June Stephens wrote to inform Hunt that ‘Annie Miller [...] is about to sit to Egg. [...] She has she says been sitting to none but such as you named’.⁹⁰ Four years later, Boyce confirmed in his diary that Miller had modelled for Stephens during Hunt’s absence.⁹¹

Stephens’s use of Miller as a model is apt, as *Mother and Child* forms a kind of pendant to Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience* (Fig. 36) in that it too depicts a modern woman caught in a moment of revelation. Both paintings comment on the position of women in Victorian society, particularly their entrapment by, or dependence upon, male fortunes – Hunt’s prostitute held at the mercy of her rich suitor is balanced against Stephens’s middle-class mother learning of the death of her husband, on whom both she and her child are financially dependent. Visual similarities emerge when we examine the two pictures together. Each woman shares a claustrophobic domestic interior with a figure who stretches out their arm from left to right in a dramatic gesture. Both Hunt and Stephens articulate the desperation of their female characters through their immediate surroundings. The women are immured within middle-class domestic interiors replete with ‘vulgar’ new furnishings. The artists painstakingly detail the oppressive sheen of mass-produced, veneered furniture: the arm of the chair that the mother clutches; the upright piano and the table gleaming in the dusky St John’s Wood apartment in *The Awakening Conscience*. Stephens himself went on to describe Hunt’s picture in 1860:

The whole room is in keeping with the subject: gaudy furniture, hard, varnishy, and new, unconsecrated to the domesticities by long use; many large mirrors, utterly disproportioned to the size of the apartment; ornaments, all in a flashy, splendid, and showy taste, explain what has been the early education of the inhabitant.⁹²

He was undoubtedly echoing Ruskin’s famous pronouncement in 1854 about the ‘fatal newness’ of the furniture in Hunt’s painting. The same array of furniture and objects, the same hard, glossy textures of varnished wood and polished metal, are detailed in *Mother and Child*. Their newness parallels the woman’s youthfulness; she is a direct product of her artificial environment, like a hothouse flower. Indeed, there are flowers all over the room, yet none of them natural: they are cut and placed in vases or manufactured as mass-produced embroideries or wallpaper for the modern middle-class home. An

⁹⁰ WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

⁹¹ Virginia Surtees, ed., *The Diaries of George Price Boyce* (Norwich: New World, 1980), 20 (21 January 1858).

⁹² Stephens, *Hunt*, 34.

inscription in Stephens's hand in the upper-left spandrel under the frame, only partially legible, mentions 'dead rose leaves [...] each like a shrivelled heart'. The picture thereby reinforces Casteras's view that 'the Victorian lady and the domicile she inhabited were both confined entities, reflecting the comfortable if suffocating seclusion and closure of middle-class life'.⁹³ The interior space in *Mother and Child* is airless and oppressive. The outside world is barely visible through the window reflected in the mirror over the fireplace; a reflection which is itself obscured by the needless bric-à-brac filling the mantelpiece: silk flowers, tasselled cushions, small bell jars and ornamental teacups. A second mirror within this reflects the closed door of the parlour, through which the deceased husband will never again pass.

Mirrors, multiple reflections and windows are deployed for a disorientating effect by Hunt and Stephens, simultaneously compressing the pictorial space and creating a confusing jumble of perspectives. This complex interplay of geometric apertures in *Mother and Child* was informed by the background of *The Awakening Conscience*, in which a large mirror reflects an open window and contains a second mirror that reflects other parts of the room, opening up multiple avenues of perspective from a single vantage point. August Egg's modern-life narrative painting from 1858, *Past and Present, No. 1* (Fig. 67), uses an identical pictorial device of a mirror over a fireplace reflecting the doorway into a middle-class apartment. As in *Mother and Child*, the woman's daughter bears witness to a domestic tragedy, and the children's toys – a collapsing house of cards – have a symbolic function. Egg and Stephens were close associates in 1853–4, when the latter began working in the former's studio producing oil sketches.⁹⁴ Stephens's flattened composition, every inch of it precisely painted, entraps the mother and child in a domestic maze of mirrors, windows and closed doors from which there seems little possibility of escape. Deprived of a stable male presence, their fate beyond the parlour can only be guessed at.

Stephens's visualisation of a contemporary subject is in keeping with his written views about the artist's engagement with the situations of modern life – views that were shared by his fellow Pre-Raphaelites. *Mother and Child* fulfils the aims which he outlined in the *Germ* and the *Crayon* by

⁹³ Susan P. Casteras, *Images of Victorian Womanhood in English Art* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1987), 53.

⁹⁴ The earliest mention of Egg is in a letter from FGS to WHH, 13 August 1853, WHHF, Folder 1-2: 'If you have not already done so I should be glad if you would not give Egg my address in Walcot Place as we cannot remain there any time longer'. The following year, FGS told WHH that 'Egg has written to me to go and make the sketch we spoke of before'; 25 June 1854, WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2.

connecting itself to the times in which it was painted, thereby making it of interest not only to audiences in its time, but also to posterity as an insight into middle-class reactions to the Crimean War. The emphasis on a female situation counterbalances the masculinity of Stephens's earlier *Morte d'Arthur*, creating a pleasing symmetry within the artist's oeuvre. Symmetry certainly seems to have fascinated him, as all of his subject pictures – *Dethe and the Riotours*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Proposal* and *Mother and Child* – pivot around opposing pairs or groups of figures who are closely interacting with one another, frozen in a single moment or gesture: the revellers confronting the old man; Sir Bedivere bearing up King Arthur; the marquis Walter proposing to Griselda; the child consoling her mother. Most of these pictures present two figures carefully balanced at the centre of the composition, with an air of emotional illegibility; it is difficult, for example, to pinpoint the precise emotion playing across the mother's face in the last painting, somewhere between shock, grief and weariness. Of course, the pictures are not without their occasional technical faults. That the same can be said of other Pre-Raphaelite productions, such as D. G. Rossetti's unsuccessful painting *Found* (which exists in two incomplete versions), has not prevented the scholarly appreciation of these works over the years.⁹⁵ Ultimately, Stephens's sense of design was more sophisticated than art historians have previously given him credit for, and his paintings and drawings are competently made and exhibit complex subject matter and iconography.

Mother and Child is the final artwork by Stephens to be discussed in this thesis. By the late 1850s he had set aside his ambitions of being a professional artist, and beyond the watercolour portrait of Clara Stephens from the 1860s (Fig. 6) no later pictures have survived (although they did exist; see Appendix 1). Whereas discussions of his artistic and literary productions have overlapped in the preceding chapters, the next three chapters are devoted solely to the developments in his published art criticism from 1856 until 1870, in order to demonstrate Stephens's importance as a commentator on Pre-Raphaelitism during periods of aesthetic change.

⁹⁵ Rossetti's first attempt at *Found*, ca. 1854–8, is now in Tullie House, Carlisle. The second version, probably commenced in 1869, is in the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE.

Chapter 6: Two Publications in *The Crayon*, 1856–9

Chapter 4 assessed Stephens's first contributions as an art critic to the *Germ* and the *Critic* from 1850–3. His next major appointment as an art critic was with an American periodical, *The Crayon*, from 1856–9, which will be the subject of the present chapter and Chapter 7. None of the texts which feature in these two chapters have been discussed by scholars, and they have never been reprinted since their first publication. Stephens's authorship has occasionally been overlooked; an extract from his series 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' was quoted in a recent book on the American school of Pre-Raphaelite artists, yet without acknowledging him as the author.¹ The *Crayon* itself has seldom been consulted as a primary source, probably because it has not been given equal importance as the many British sources of the period. Yet much of the material which will be discussed here was original; Stephens wrote the articles especially for the *Crayon*. They communicated theories and discussions of Pre-Raphaelitism to a new transatlantic readership and described the paintings which his readers would not yet have been able to examine in person. In addition, he utilised his deep knowledge of art history in order to affirm the historical antecedents of Pre-Raphaelite painting, thereby legitimising the movement as a modern continuation – rather than a mere imitation – of earlier ideals and principles.

Stephens was invited to join the *Crayon* by William Michael Rossetti, who had been the journal's English art correspondent at John Ruskin's recommendation. Although Stephens never visited the United States, he corresponded with one of the *Crayon*'s editors, John Durand, sending him manuscripts of his latest articles and expressing support for the journal's promotion of Ruskinian and Pre-Raphaelite principles in America.² Beginning with four articles on the life of the artist Benjamin Robert Haydon, Stephens next contributed a short story, 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror'; an eight-part series titled 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', which will be discussed in Chapter 7; and essays on 'The Idea of a Picture' and 'On Finish in Art'. These publications appeared between

¹ Barbara Dayer Gallati, 'Thought on Canvas: American Pre-Raphaelite Iconography', in *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists*, eds. Linda S. Ferber and Nancy K. Anderson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 66, quoting FGS's description of WHH's *The Light of the World*.

² FGS's letters dated from 27 May 1856 to 29 March 1858 are now among the John Durand Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division, MssCol 866, Box 4, Folder 3 (JDP).

February 1856 and July 1859. The van Eyck short story was one of the earliest Pre-Raphaelite responses to the Early Netherlandish master in print, while the essay ‘On Finish’ made Stephens perhaps the first member of the PRB to directly address the art of Raphael in a sustained literary analysis. This chapter will examine these two overlooked works, which offer new insights into the Pre-Raphaelites’ perception of the historical artists they admired and vilified as well as Stephens’s development as critic.

William James Stillman addressed the origins of the *Crayon* in his 1901 autobiography. In the mid-1850s, finding ‘the absence of a periodical devoted to [artistic matters]’, Stillman’s contemporaries ‘came to the conclusion that it would be a good and useful thing that I should start an art journal’.³ He had absorbed Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*, and the philosophies of American landscapists including William Page and Samuel Worcester Rowse – a transatlantic blend of aesthetic principles which Stillman ‘burned to disseminate’.⁴ In 1860, Stillman famously reminisced that the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843) was ‘one of the sensation-books of its time and fell upon the public opinion of the day like a thunderbolt from a clear sky’.⁵ He had befriended Ruskin himself during a trip to London in 1850, and saw Millais’s *Christ in the House of His Parents* at the Royal Academy; ‘I left England with a fermentation of art ideas in my brain, in which the influence of Turner and [James Baker] Pyne, [...] and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites mingled with the influence of Ruskin’.⁶ Stillman’s endorsement of the English critic aligned him with modern American tastes in the mid-1850s: ‘The art-loving public was full of Ruskinian enthusiasm’, and the *Crayon* thus garnered ‘a considerable public, sympathetic with its sentimental vein, readers of Ruskin and lovers of pure nature’.⁷ Stillman invited John Durand, the son of Asher Brown Durand, president of the National Academy of Design in New York, to join him as co-editor.⁸

³ William James Stillman, *The Autobiography of a Journalist*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1901), 1:221–22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:222.

⁵ William James Stillman, ‘Modern Painters’, *Atlantic Monthly* (August 1860), 239.

⁶ Stillman, *Autobiography*, 1:139.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:222 and 227.

⁸ The first number of the *Crayon* also carried the first in a series of letters by Asher B. Durand on landscape painting which express Ruskinian sympathies: ‘You need not a period of pupilage [sic] in an artist’s studio to paint; [...] let me earnestly recommend to you one Studio which you may freely enter, [...] the Studio of Nature. Yes! go first to Nature to learn to paint landscape, and when you shall have learnt to imitate her, you may then study the pictures of great artists with benefit’; Asher Brown Durand, ‘Letters on Landscape Painting. Letter 1’, *Crayon* 1, no. 1 (3 January 1855): 2.

The *Crayon*'s inaugural issue on 3 January 1855 opened with a proclamation of the times: 'In the midst of a great commercial crisis, [...] an effort has been organized, having for its object the education of our countrymen to the perception and enjoyment of Beauty'.⁹ An image of 'a little blue flower [...] which blossoms almost at the edge of our forest snows, springing up at the first instant [sic] of breath the earth gets after its winter-trance', was used as an emblem of hope and as a metaphor for the progress of art in the United States, 'inert under the cold necessities of a national childhood, and the cares and storms of a political first existence'. (The *Crayon* would cease in July 1861, after the outbreak of a new political storm, the American Civil War, in April that year.) This introductory article is permeated with references to seeds, budding flowers and new growth; they recall the organic, botanical allusions in the title of the PRB's magazine which cast Pre-Raphaelite principles as the 'germ' of an art-literary revolution. The *Crayon* was therefore instrumental in promoting modern British art overseas, with Stephens reporting to his American readers from the artists' studios.

Music and Masculinity: 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror'

Stephens's historical short story 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror' was published in the *Crayon* in August 1856, under his real name.¹⁰ The tale has never been reprinted or discussed in studies of Pre-Raphaelite literature, and it is examined here for the first time.¹¹ Recent scholarship has highlighted the Pre-Raphaelites' artistic emulation of the fifteenth-century Flemish painter Jan van Eyck, who features as a prominent character in Stephens's tale. Jenny Graham's *Inventing Van Eyck* (2007) and Elizabeth Prettejohn's *Modern Painters, Old Masters* (2017) have dedicated entire chapters to this phenomenon.¹² The influence of van Eyck on the Pre-Raphaelites was also the subject of an exhibition at the National Gallery in London from 2017–18. The accompanying catalogue, as

⁹ 'Introductory', *Crayon* 1, no. 1 (3 January 1855): 1.

¹⁰ Frederic George Stephens, 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror', *Crayon* (August 1856), 236–39. The tale opens with a dedication 'to my dear J. Y.', dated 26 June 1856: 'In acknowledgement of a most noble and generous action, performed in a time of great trouble, I dedicate this Tale, with the utmost gratitude and affection'. FGS sent the text of this dedication to John Durand on 27 June 1856; JDP. The individual is probably Hunt, who had provided Stephens's family with financial assistance in 1853 (see Chapter 1, note 42).

¹¹ Duval, 'Stephens', 48, only references FGS's 'articles on Benjamin Robert Haydon and Jan Van Eyck', not distinguishing the latter as a short story.

¹² Jenny Graham, *Inventing Van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 91–123; Prettejohn, *Modern Painters*, 58–96.

well as Claire Yearwood's 2014 thesis on mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite painting, both mention Stephens's tale in passing, but do not assess it in any detail.¹³ The tale casts van Eyck as a historic forebear of the modern Pre-Raphaelites, working in a similar spirit of patient devotion to nature.

The plot of 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror' concerns a young man named Pierre, who lives in the city of Venlo in the Netherlands in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁴ He comes from poverty: his mother is 'a poor woman whose husband had been a carver in wood, much employed by the canons of Bruges'.¹⁵ As a child, Pierre is educated at a choir school and displays an early talent for singing, but he also aspires to learn 'the art of playing on all instruments'. When he is eighteen, his mother dies and he is taken into the household of the Burgrave of Venlo, whose wife pities him and employs him to attend upon her. He eventually fulfils his desire to learn musical instruments, and at the age of twenty he travels to Bruges to be schooled in the newly improved regal (a kind of keyboard manually pumped by bellows). There Pierre befriends the brother painters Hubert and Jan van Eyck; the latter will become important at the end of the story. Returning to Venlo, Pierre meets an unnamed 'Demoiselle', the ward of the Burgrave's wife. One day, the Demoiselle spies Pierre playing the regal and develops an attraction for him. Love blossoms mutually but unacknowledged between them.

At this point, Pierre contracts the 'great pestilence' then sweeping Europe and is nursed back to health by the Demoiselle. Left melancholy by the disease, the young man decides to become a monk and joins the Brotherhood of St Lambert in Liège, changing his name to Brother Lactantius (although Stephens continues to refer to him as Pierre for the remainder of the story). The Demoiselle still pines for him, but is pressured into marrying 'a young Count of the Duchy of Brabant' instead. The monk Pierre returns to Bruges for an errand, and there renews his friendship with Jan van Eyck, calling at his studio. Van Eyck is now a successful painter, undertaking numerous commissions from noble patrons. He shows Pierre his latest painting in progress: a double portrait of a count and countess, who turn out to be the Demoiselle and her new husband. In the story's climactic scene, the couple visit van Eyck's studio whilst Pierre is present. He tries to conceal his presence, but the Demoiselle glimpses his face in a mirror hanging on the wall, and recognising her old love, nearly

¹³ Smith, *Reflections*, 32; Claire Yearwood, 'The Looking-Glass World: Mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite Painting 1850–1915' (PhD diss., University of York, 2014), 129.

¹⁴ FGS misspells it 'Venloo'.

¹⁵ Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 236.

faints from surprise. While the count goes to fetch help, van Eyck reunites Pierre and the Demoiselle for a brief moment, joining their hands in silence, before the young woman leaves forever. She later asks van Eyck to include in the background of his painting of her and her husband the reflection of herself and Pierre together in the mirror, ‘as she had seen it; that she might never forget him or his true heart’.

Stephens’s main source of inspiration was van Eyck’s double portrait of the Italian merchant Giovanni di Nicolao Arnolfini and his wife (Fig. 31), painted in 1434 and purchased by the National Gallery in 1842. As the RA and the National Gallery collection were housed in the same building in Trafalgar Square, Stephens and his fellow PRBs had only to walk from the Schools in the east wing across to the west wing in order to study the portrait in detail.¹⁶ In Chapter 3, it was demonstrated that Stephens adapted the *Arnolfini Portrait* for his painting *The Proposal* in 1850. In March 1848, some months before the Brotherhood was founded, Ruskin praised the painting in the *Quarterly Review*, although its precise subject, particularly the identity of the sitters, was still a mystery.¹⁷ Ralph N. Wornum’s 1847 catalogue of the Gallery speculated that the picture ‘may be Van Eyck’s own portrait with that of his wife’, owing to the signature ‘Johannes de Eyck fuit hic’ inscribed over the mirror on the back wall of the interior.¹⁸ The couple were not identified with confidence as one ‘Jean Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenany his wife’ until 1863.¹⁹ Stephens, writing in the early 1850s, was therefore free to provide his own interpretation of the portrait’s sitters and its enigmatic pictorial elements – namely, the round convex mirror with its minutely painted reflection. He was the only Pre-Raphaelite to make an explicit written reference to the painting in the movement’s early years.

Evidence that Stephens first wrote the tale in as early as 1850 can be found in the *PRB Journal*. On 2 December, W. M. Rossetti heard from Stephens: ‘A tale of a mediaeval musician which he [Stephens] wrote in the Spring (title forgotten) was sent to a magazine started by a friend of his in Edinburgh, and bearing some likeness to the *Germ* in its conduct and impending certainty of failure; and which, indeed, came to an end before the tale could be published’.²⁰ Whether the van

¹⁶ Smith, *Reflections*, 32.

¹⁷ [John Ruskin], ‘Eastlake’s History of Oil-Painting’, *Quarterly Review* (March 1848), 394.

¹⁸ Ralph N. Wornum, rev. Charles Lock Eastlake, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1847), 76.

¹⁹ Wornum and Eastlake, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue*, 37th edition (1863), 88.

²⁰ *PRBJ*, 84 (2 December 1850).

Eyck element was present from the outset, or was a later addition, is difficult to ascertain, although Rossetti's observation that it featured a 'mediaeval musician' correlates with the story which appeared in the *Crayon*. The further importance of music in the tale will be considered shortly. Another clue for the story's early composition can be found within the narrative itself. At one point, it veers off to describe 'a pious Christian missionary sent out of Westphalia, in [the] hopes of weaning the fierce Frieslanders from the horrible paganism they professed'. The missionary is captured and 'buried in sand heated with fire'. This could have been prompted by Hunt's painting of *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (Fig. 79), which was completed in 1850 and for which Stephens modelled as one of the pagans in March that year.²¹ In all likelihood, then, he initially wrote the tale – or an early version of it – for inclusion in the *Germ* in April or May 1850; when that folded, he sent it to the unidentified Edinburgh magazine, which was also unsuccessful.

Six years later, in May 1856, W. M. Rossetti forwarded the manuscript to the editors of the *Crayon* on Stephens's behalf; Rossetti received a letter, probably from John Durand, confirming that 'Mr Stephens's tale will appear' in a future issue.²² On 27 June, Stephens wrote to Durand with a request to alter the title from 'The Reflection in the Mirror' to 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror'.²³ This was done at William Michael's suggestion, 'as better expressing the artistic subject of the tale'. The editors' willingness to print a short story by a Pre-Raphaelite writer was a result of their having already published 'The Lost Titian' by Christina Rossetti, which appeared in the *Crayon* in July 1856.²⁴ As its title suggests, 'The Lost Titian' imagines an actual sixteenth-century Venetian painter, Titian, mingling with fabricated characters and participating in imagined conversations and scenarios – crucially, a dice game which Titian loses, causing him to forfeit the newly completed 'masterpiece of his life' as part of a drunken wager.²⁵ Although this lost masterpiece is Rossetti's creation, her description of it was inspired by a real Titian in the National Gallery, *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1520–3), as is clear from the following extract, taking place moments after Titian has

²¹ *PRBJ*, 61 (6 March 1850): '[Hunt] painted Stephens's head for a savage outside, with various others'.

²² [(?)John Durand] to WMR, 23 May 1856, quoted in a letter from WMR to FGS, undated (late-May or June 1856), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 76, ff. 47–48.

²³ FGS to Durand, 27 June 1856, JDP.

²⁴ C. G. R. [Christina Rossetti], 'The Lost Titian', *Crayon* (July 1856), 200–02.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

finished it: ‘The orange drapery was perfect in its fruitlike intensity of hue; [...] the sunlight lapped drowsily every dell and swelling upland; [...] Look a moment, and those cymbals must clash, that panther must bound forward’.²⁶ This painting is not *Bacchus and Ariadne* – the man who wins it from Titian later paints a dragon over it, in order to disguise it from his creditors – but the picture hanging in the National Gallery became a unique point of reference for Rossetti, as one of the few large history paintings by Titian which could be readily accessed and studied in a public gallery.

The same was true of van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Portrait*, which in the 1840s was ‘the only example of an early Netherlandish painting in the national collection’.²⁷ Like Rossetti’s ‘Lost Titian’, Stephens’s ‘Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ conflates historical fact with invented characters and incidents. The narrative commences in 1450, which already introduces an anomaly, as van Eyck died in 1441 and the *Arnolfini Portrait* was created in 1434 – the date inscribed above the mirror in the painting.²⁸ It seems surprising that Stephens, usually so keen to use antiquarian and art historical publications as sources for his writings, disregarded the existing scholarly literature about van Eyck – and even the visible facts within the portrait itself – in writing his tale. Instead, he used the mysterious painting in the National Gallery as a starting point for his own creativity, regardless of how far his tale deviated from historical truth. The tale’s final sentence: ‘Thus it was done; and so it remains still’, which follows the Demoiselle’s request to van Eyck to include the mirror reflection in her portrait as a memento, suggests that the painting described in the tale is real, and that the reader can go and see it for themselves. However, only someone familiar with van Eyck’s oeuvre would know that Stephens was referencing the picture hanging in the National Gallery. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which American readers would have been familiar with the *Arnolfini Portrait*, although it was reproduced in engravings in British books and newspapers in the 1840s, which may have found their way across the Atlantic.²⁹ Some readers would also have visited London and seen the painting in person.

²⁶ Ibid., 200.

²⁷ Smith, *Reflections*, 30.

²⁸ Ralph N. Wornum, revised by Charles Lock Eastlake, *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures of the National Gallery* (London: 1847), 75, which FGS could have accessed, suggests that van Eyck ‘must have been dead before Feb. 24, 1446’.

²⁹ Smith, *Reflections*, 15–20. The portrait was reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* and *Felix Summerly’s Handbook for the National Gallery*, both 1843.

As was previously mentioned, music plays a central role in ‘Van Eyck’s Mirror’. Frequent references to obscure early instruments, such as the viol, lute, rote and regal, intensify the tale’s quaintly medieval setting.³⁰ Stephens may have been inspired by reproductions of the *Ghent Altarpiece* designed by the van Eyck brothers in the 1430s, with its depictions of groups of angel choristers and musicians playing an organ, harp and viol. D. G. Rossetti was also interested in depicting archaic instruments in his medievalising drawings and watercolours of the 1850s. Rossetti hinted at the correlation between art-making and listening to music in his short story for the *Germ*, ‘Hand and Soul’, about an early Italian painter. The artist, Chiaro, whilst working in his lodgings beside a church in Pisa, often hears ‘the music of the organ and the long murmur that the chanting left’ which are integral to the medieval atmosphere of the story.³¹ Both Chiaro, a painter, and Stephens’s Pierre, a musician, are cast as dreamers who experience the world in a multisensory way.

The hallucinatory effects of sound are explored at the beginning of Stephens’s ‘Van Eyck’s Mirror’. In his youth, Pierre spends time exploring the towers of Venlo Cathedral; ‘this was his favourite spot to hear the wind rambling over these stones, or to be up in the belfry when the storms came over the level country into the spire, making harp-strings of the long ropes’.³² The Aeolian harp, an instrument designed to be played by the wind passing over its strings, had previously fascinated the Romantic poets, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ‘The Eolian Harp’ (1796). Coleridge’s poem demonstrates the ‘symbolic power of music to draw or entrance its listeners’, inspiring fantastical visions.³³ Pierre experiences a similar visionary effect in the cathedral belfry:

He had gone up into the spire [...] one day during a storm, ascending to where the great bells swung, and while the thunder rolled away, put his ear against the sounding-rim of the largest bell, – whence the great quivering, incommensurable rings of sound are shaken down and expand beyond the utmost horizon. And there had he heard, as it seemed to him, a strange tune running through and all throughout the mass, as though up there he *really* heard the sound which he always thought was in the world, an infinite music.³⁴

Stephens’s heavy use of commas, punctuating his sentences with short pauses, conveys the movement of a great bell swinging in the wind. Dynamic verbs – ‘rolled’, ‘quivering’, ‘shaken’, ‘running’ – create an atmosphere charged with movement. Pierre’s pose, standing with his ear against the bell,

³⁰ The rote, also known as the crowd in English or crwth in Welsh, is an archaic stringed instrument resembling a lyre which is played with a bow.

³¹ Rossetti, ‘Hand and Soul’, 25.

³² Stephens, ‘Reflection’, 237.

³³ J. Douglas Kneale, “‘Between Poetry and Oratory’: Coleridge’s Romantic Effusions”, in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), 138.

³⁴ Stephens, ‘Van Eyck’s Mirror’, 237.

evokes Millais's *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (Fig. 68), for which Stephens had modelled in 1849, and Millais also depicts a young man enthralled by sounds emanating from a visionary source (the spirit Ariel whispering in Ferdinand's ear, invisible to him yet visible to us). Music continues to be integral to the narrative: Pierre's first trip to Bruges to learn 'a new improvement [...] in the construction of the Regal' is when he first meets Jan van Eyck; Pierre and the Demoiselle first see each other when the latter spies him playing his instrument; in van Eyck's studio, Pierre plays on a regal as he awaits the Demoiselle and her husband, in an echo of their first meeting. Stephens evokes these musical sounds in order to complement the intensely visual moments within the story. This merging of visual and aural phenomena anticipates later developments in his art criticism in 1860s (to be discussed in Chapter 8), as well as Walter Pater's famous assertion that 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music', a philosophy associated with the Aesthetic Movement in the 1870s. Stephens's tale also highlights medieval Europe as a time of artistic innovation: just as the van Eycks and other artists began to use oil paint to achieve an unprecedented richness of colour and depth of detail, so too did developments in the construction of instruments enable musicians to experiment with new sounds and methods of playing.

Painting also features prominently in Stephens's tale, which at times assumes the tone of a manifesto for modern Pre-Raphaelite practices. Rossetti's 'Hand and Soul' had featured a young artist who 'endeavoured from early boyhood towards the imitation of any objects offered in nature' – a thinly veiled portrayal of a Pre-Raphaelite painter at work.³⁵ Similarly, when characterising Jan van Eyck Stephens praises 'his patience in exactly imitating whatever was before him', before continuing:

Whether it were the intricate folds of a dress, or the close tufty texture of velvets, or any goldsmith's work, he set himself exactly to copy, disdaining to think that he could represent these things otherwise than in all possible fullness and care, [...] doing nature honour for her own sake.³⁶

Van Eyck, then, is cast as an authentic 'pre-Raphaelite' whose painting techniques chime with modern Pre-Raphaelite principles. In his first essay for the *Germ*, Stephens typified the ideal artist as someone possessing 'a determination to represent the thing and the whole of the thing, by training himself to the deepest observation of its fact and detail, enabling himself to reproduce, as far as is

³⁵ *Germ*, 23.

³⁶ Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 237.

possible, nature herself'.³⁷ Although he wrote this in an essay on the early Italian artists, the intentions are the same; be it Rossetti's invented Chiaro dell' Erma, or Stephens's fictionalised depiction of Jan van Eyck, both are seeking to imitate nature with a painstaking exactitude. That the objects which van Eyck imitates are not naturally occurring, but manmade – a dress, velvet, goldsmith's work – matters little, as all are accorded equal importance. This is true of the *Arnolfini Portrait* itself, a domestic interior filled with handcrafted furniture and ornaments. Towards the end of Stephens's tale, Pierre/Lactantius witnesses van Eyck's progress on this painting:

The monk [...] watched in silence the progress of his work, which seemed no more than that of the hands of the horologe on a small table hard by. Busily and silently went on the hands themselves, but not the less, was the hour complete or the picture painted. Lactantius recognised the room in which he stood as forming the back-ground in the picture to two figures conversing; being almost finished, he could observe the open window, with fruit near, and the mirrors which hung opposite to him on the wall of the chamber; and the steel armleuchter which Johann was painting, was pendent from the ceiling.³⁸

The objects described – the window, the fruit, the mirror, the metal chandelier – recur in the *Arnolfini Portrait*. Pierre experiences the uncanny feeling of recognising the painted space as being a precise, miniaturised duplicate of the very room in which he stands; a multitude of mirrors – there is only one in the finished portrait, but Stephens implies several more – further complicates these sensations.

Stephens's characterisation of van Eyck as a quiet, methodical painter is echoed in D. G. Rossetti's pictures at this time. Alastair Grieve has recognised that 'portrayals of mediaeval artists at work occur frequently in [Rossetti's] paintings and writings'.³⁹ This is particularly true of the 1850s, when Rossetti produced two watercolours in this vein, *Giotto Painting Dante's Portrait* (1852) and *Fra Pace* (1856), and a little discussed and rarely seen oil painting from 1857, *St Catherine* (Fig. 69).⁴⁰ Rossetti apparently even made a drawing of Jan van Eyck in his studio in the mid-1850s, although this does not survive.⁴¹ *St Catherine* depicts a medieval painter's workshop with a model posing as St Catherine, holding the accessories of her martyrdom. The artist stands at his easel, using

³⁷ Stephens, 'Early Italian Art', 59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

³⁹ Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 166.

⁴⁰ Preliminary studies for *Giotto Painting Dante's Portrait* survive in Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and the Tate. In 1849, DGR gave FGS two drawings showing medieval artists at work. The first was a design for *Giotto Painting Dante's Portrait*; *PRBJ*, 32–33 (16 December 1849): '[Gabriel] drew a little on the design of *Giotto Painting Dante's Portrait*, which he is finishing up for Stephens'. The second was a copy of *Dante Drawing an Angel on the First Anniversary of Beatrice's Death*, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the original pen and ink drawing is now at Birmingham.

⁴¹ Thomas Sulman, 'A Memorable Art Class', *Good Words* (August 1895), 550, mentions seeing 'the grotesque "Jan Van Eyck's Studio"' among other drawings by DGR.

a thin brush to apply his pigments onto a panel. Like Stephens's van Eyck, Rossetti's painter is closely observing what he sees before him; although we are denied a view of the painting itself, we are to assume from his steady hand and thoughtful expression, and the fact he is an artist of the Middle Ages, that it is a truthful, careful likeness of the female model. The location of the scene is ambiguous; whether it is set in Italy or somewhere in northern Europe cannot easily be distinguished. Nevertheless, Rossetti juxtaposes two different modes of artistic execution, one of which draws from a real-life model, the other from the imagination.

Stephens's examination of the male painter at work opens up a discussion of the differing types of masculinity represented in 'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror', and the ways in which he blurs the lines between traditional masculine and feminine traits. Pierre's physical appearance is sketched with detail at the beginning of the tale:

[His face was] very tender and lovely; not wasted, though pale; with grey sad eyes, clear and humble, yet when aroused vivacious and penetrating. He had a long girlish face, such as we see in old Florentine portraits, a short, full-lipped, generous-meaning mouth, round chin, and dark hair; and truly his soul, which God taught the ladies to read in his face, was wise and generous, and gentle.⁴²

Pierre's delicate, androgynous facial features are coupled with his being 'sickly and poor in constitution, slightly deformed in body, and in youth scarcely able to walk'. He is also emotionally sensitive, described as being '[a]lways a dreamer, and weak in health'. When, aged eighteen, he joins the household of the Burgrave of Venlo, and hears the Burgrave's wife practicing on the viol or regal, he 'would lay down and weep, so that none heard him'.⁴³ Stephens therefore inverts Victorian expectations of masculine strength and stoicism, offering a vision of manhood that is androgynous, physically weak and introspective. Simon Cooke has identified this alternative type of masculinity within Tennyson's poetry, 'in which the emphasis is not on physical fitness but on an apparent frailty and inwardness'.⁴⁴ This is equally applicable to Stephens's choice of protagonists. Pierre is of the same stock as the first-person narrator of Stephens's 'Arthur' poem from 1849, previously discussed in Chapter 2: a sensitive male dreamer from the then-present day who transports himself back into the Middle Ages through his imagination and envisages himself as a wandering minstrel (another

⁴² Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 236–37.

⁴³ Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 237.

⁴⁴ Simon Cooke, 'Interpreting Masculinity: Pre-Raphaelite Illustration and the Works of Tennyson, Christina Rossetti and Trollope', in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities: Constructions of Masculinity in Art and Literature*, eds. Amelia Yeates and Serena Trowbridge (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 133.

musician), becoming a comrade of the heroic and energetic Arthur and Sir Gawain. The chief difference is that Pierre already inhabits the Middle Ages; his present (the late-fourteenth century) is Stephens's ideal historical past. The repeated references to his infirmity may have a personal origin: Stephens was himself 'slightly deformed in body' as the result of an accident in 1837, which would have left him 'scarcely able to walk' as a child.⁴⁵ That Pierre's appearance includes traditionally 'girlish' features – in particular his 'full-lipped' mouth and 'round chin' – anticipates the later productions of Simeon Solomon, who would explore a type of androgynous male figure, including that of the priest, in his art in the 1860s onwards, although Solomon's homosexuality is at variance with the heterosexual romance at the centre of Stephens's story.

Stephens enhances his point by contrasting Pierre with the count whom the Demoiselle marries: 'a personable young man [...] with a tawny moustache, fair round cheeks, and a reasonable reputation as a warrior'.⁴⁶ The count's facial hair and coloured cheeks indicate his virility, while Pierre is clean-shaven and pale. The latter's mind is described as being 'as pure as the white of the alb the priest wore', while his decision to become a monk signifies a devotion to a life of chastity.⁴⁷ As Dinah Roe has observed, Stephens previously expressed the problems of mingling sexual expression with artistic production in his essay on Italian art for the *Germ*, declaring that 'Sensuality is a meanness repugnant to youth, and disgusting in age: a degradation at all times'.⁴⁸ Roe also highlights Stephens's interest in another figure of medieval chastity, the knight, in the same *Germ* essay, as he quotes from Tennyson's 'Sir Galahad'.⁴⁹ These notions of chivalry are revived in 'Van Eyck's Mirror', as the Demoiselle, after first meeting Pierre, 'thought to love him if he were a gay young knight, as fine a dancer as he was a musician'.⁵⁰ She thus projects onto him the ideals found in the courtly romances she would have read as a young woman in the fifteenth century, which promoted male chastity as part of chivalric codes of conduct. This 'fancy' of hers only increases in Pierre's absence, as he confines himself to his room to compose some music; 'When this was completed, she

⁴⁵ Discussed in Chapter 1.

⁴⁶ Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 238.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁴⁸ Dinah Roe, "'Me, Who Ride Alone": Male Chastity in Pre-Raphaelite Poetry and Art', in *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities*, 154; Stephens, 'Early Italian Art', 63.

⁴⁹ Roe, 'Male Chastity', 154.

⁵⁰ Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 238.

[the Demoiselle] no longer heeded the body, but thought of his mind alone'. Pierre's chastity, then, fulfils Stephens's own ideals regarding the avoidance of 'sensual' delights in making art: music, as an immaterial phenomenon, lacks the physicality of painting.

The other prominent male presence is Jan van Eyck himself, who is introduced later in the tale as 'a frank and simple man of great heart' who 'kept his own way steadily'.⁵¹ He is artistic but workmanlike, honest and uncomplicated in temperament, as befits a realist who paints what he sees without affectation. He is also married, and his relationship with his beloved Katerine (another historical anomaly, as Jan van Eyck's wife was named Margaret) is stable, loving and presumably sexual. For Pierre, a virginal, fatherless youth 'bred among women', van Eyck becomes a surrogate paternal figure, although Stephens was also drawing upon the homosocial bonds which he formed with other men in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. '[A]s might be imagined', Stephens writes, 'there grew between these two different minds great love and friendship, which was never forgotten by either'.⁵² The difference between the two men is as much to do with their creative outlets as their temperaments and intellects: Pierre is a musician and composer, van Eyck is a painter. Stephens's representation of van Eyck as an artist who labours 'busily and silently' is in keeping with the Pre-Raphaelites' ideal code of conduct as identified by Herbert Sussman. In Sussman's view, the early paintings of the Brotherhood – particularly by Millais and Hunt – display 'a distinctly masculine form of knowledge' and are the result of 'long and unremitting labour'. The artists' 'lengthy on-site observation' of real objects and natural phenomena help to authorise their finished paintings as feats of male prowess.⁵³ The description of van Eyck painting the background interior of the double portrait in Stephens's story, quoted earlier in this discussion, and the characterisation of his 'energetic nature seeking action only', maintains this ideal. It is possible that Stephens was thinking about the different masculine energies driving the PRB: on the one hand, the romantic, introspective qualities evident in the art and poetry of D. G. Rossetti (and Stephens's own poems), as embodied in Pierre; on the other, the 'energetic', laborious painting practices of Millais and Hunt, typified by Jan van Eyck. Stephens's story reconciles these two types of artistic masculinity, a collaboration that inspires 'great love and

⁵¹ Ibid., 237.

⁵² Stephens, 'Van Eyck's Mirror', 238.

⁵³ Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 117–18.

friendship’.

‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ is not completely successful as a work of fiction; its narrative lacks a coherent ‘beginning-middle-end’ structure, and characters are introduced in an ad hoc fashion as and when the plot requires them. These are signs that Stephens did not plan his tale properly before starting it. Nevertheless, writing it enabled him to express Pre-Raphaelite ideals in a different way to his essays and articles – embedded within a fictional landscape which combines art historical fact with his own imagined characters and events. In Jan van Eyck, Stephens discovered a forebear for the PRB’s founding principles of truth to nature and painterly precision. That John Durand agreed to publish the story in the *Crayon* signifies its importance as an example of the Pre-Raphaelite short story – a narrower literary field than the poetry of the movement, with which Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti also experimented.

A Critique of Raphael: ‘On Finish in Art’

If ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ praises a historical artist admired by the Pre-Raphaelites, another publication by Stephens in the *Crayon*, his essay ‘On Finish in Art’, criticises the tendencies of those artists whom the group rejected – specifically, Raphael, the ‘Prince of Painters’. The PRB’s repudiation of this artist is now taken for granted, but it is surprisingly difficult to find early Pre-Raphaelite texts which directly mention him. The ‘List of Immortals’ composed by D. G. Rossetti and Hunt in August 1848 places Raphael at the top, with one star beside his name.⁵⁴ Did the group choose to honour Raphael in this way because he was the catalyst for their artistic revolution? W. M. Rossetti addressed the issue in his introduction for the reprint of the *Germ* in 1899:

It would be a mistake to suppose, because they called themselves Præraphaelites, that they seriously disliked the works produced by Raphael; but they disliked the works produced by Raphael’s uninspired satellites, and were resolved to find out, by personal study and practice, what their own several faculties and adaptabilities might be, without being bound by rules and big-wiggeries founded upon the performance of Raphael or of any one.⁵⁵

Although this would seem to clear up any uncertainties, Stephens’s published writings in the mid-1850s complicate Rossetti’s statement. ‘On Finish in Art’ directly criticises Raphael’s work and also takes aim at the artist’s personality.

⁵⁴ *PRBJ*, Appendix 2, 107.

⁵⁵ *Germ*, 6, introduction dated July 1899; the reprint was published in 1901.

In denouncing Raphael, Stephens was putting into print what other members of the PRB had already expressed in visual terms. In the Ashmolean Museum is a small sketch of a ‘head after Raffaele’ by Millais, probably from the early 1850s (Fig. 70). An annotation by Thomas Combe reports that Millais had ‘greatly ridiculed’ the Ashmolean’s collection of Raphael drawings and proclaimed that ‘they might possibly be worth a shilling a piece – “who would give more for such things as these?”’.⁵⁶ Millais’s sketch is deliberately crude, like a child’s doodle, with three lines bluntly suggesting eyes and a nose (or perhaps a mouth) and frantic circles describing a head. The sketch therefore casts Raphael’s style as regressive and implies that the High Renaissance master and his followers thoughtlessly scribbled down the first thing that came into their heads, rather than studying an object closely and carefully. This visual criticism continued in Millais’s double portrait of Eliza and Sarah Wyatt of 1850 (Fig. 71). In the painting, the engravings after Raphael and Leonardo hanging on the wall are strategically contrasted with the modern mother-and-child group in the foreground, in order to suggest, in Alison Smith’s words, ‘that the High Renaissance style [...] is not only more facile (being based on contrivance above direct observation), but less applicable to exploring the intricacies of modern relationships than the “primitive” style that preceded it’.⁵⁷ The Pre-Raphaelites therefore expressed their disdain for Raphael by artistic and literary means in order to combat the persistent veneration of the artist’s work by academicians, critics and historians.

Stephens wrote ‘On Finish in Art’ at the end of 1856.⁵⁸ He sent the manuscript to John Durand on 26 December, and hoped it would be published in the February 1857 issue.⁵⁹ When this did not happen, Stephens told Durand that ‘[a]s I wrote that article with unusual care, it will be, I must confess, a great disappointment to me, if you should not think it suitable for the Crayon’.⁶⁰ Durand later informed him that the essay was ‘long and to readers generally, abstruse and therefore less

⁵⁶ Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, WA1894.61.2. Birmingham also preserves a parodic sketch by Millais of a Raphael Madonna and Child (1906P602).

⁵⁷ Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais*, 60.

⁵⁸ FGS to Durand, undated (26 December 1856), JDP: ‘I send to you an Essay which I have just completed which I hope you will consider suitable to the Journal. Should you approve of this I trust it will be in time for the February number’. This letter was later dated ‘Novem. 1856’ by Durand, but a later letter by FGS (see next note) confirms that it was posted on 26 December.

⁵⁹ FGS to Durand, 20 January 1857: ‘I trust you have received a contribution (for the February no.) from me entitled “An Essay on Finish”; 23 February 1857: ‘I posted [the article] to you on the 26th Decr last’ (JDP).

⁶⁰ FGS to Durand, 23 February 1857, JDP.

valuable commercially speaking'.⁶¹ It was eventually published in July 1859, as Stephens's last publication in the *Crayon*. The subject of the article was probably prompted by the third volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, which was published in January 1856 and devoted a chapter to artistic finish.⁶² W. M. Rossetti noted in a letter to the *Crayon* that the 'almost endless question of the worth of finish' was 'brought to the intelligible test' in Ruskin's book, so there can be no doubt that it was read by members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle.⁶³ 'Finish' was defined in *Modern Painters* as 'the completeness of the expression of ideas', and Ruskin concluded 'that "finishing" means in art simply "telling more truth"; and that whatever we have in any sort begun wisely, it is good to finish thoroughly'.⁶⁴

One question would be, then, whether Stephens agreed with Ruskin's ideas. However, in Stephens's view it mattered little if a work of art was finished 'thoroughly' – 'carried far', in his words. An artist could strive to represent 'as much as a powerful eyesight could perceive', resulting in 'extreme minuteness, or the representation of a great number of things in a small space', but for Stephens this was not enough. Instead, a painting or sculpture must also be 'the work of thought'. To make his point, Stephens juxtaposes an unusual artefact, a cherry stone minutely carved with innumerable faces and heads (Fig. 72), with the reclining statue of Theseus from the Parthenon in the British Museum (Fig. 73). The cherry stone exemplified 'minuteness and labour', but nothing more; it could not compete with the naturalistic vigour of the marble statue which, 'with its skin-like surface and flexible muscles', was the 'result of the application of the most learned and accomplished intellect'. John Lucas Tupper recorded a memorable encounter with the Theseus statue during an anatomy class in his diary, published in the *Crayon* in 1855, while Stephens recounted Benjamin Robert Haydon's enthusiastic response to the statue in his biographical articles on Haydon, also in the *Crayon*, earlier in 1856. Both artists praised the sculpture for its anatomical realism, with Haydon delighting in 'the essential detail of actual life' and Tupper remarking that he and his fellow students 'made discoveries in the Theseus; laid our hands on the awful shoulders, between the great collar-

⁶¹ John Durand to FGS, 3 March 1858, CSRM, 2015.47.64.2. In the same letter Durand stated he would pay FGS £2.8.0 for the article – 'the utmost I can allow'.

⁶² Ruskin, *Works*, 5:168.

⁶³ William Michael Rossetti, 'Art News from England. Letter XI [20 January 1856]', *Crayon* 3, no. 3 (March 1856): 87–88.

⁶⁴ Ruskin, *Works*, 5:168.

bones, and felt for the beating of his heart'.⁶⁵ Stephens, then, was drawing upon a received opinion among artists that the anonymous sculptor of the Parthenon Theseus had captured something more than mere laborious detail. The carved cherry stone, meanwhile, was comparable to a waxwork figure which 'is not an atom nearer to truth of nature because it has hairs stuck round its eyes in imitation of the natural cilia of the eyelids – in fact, it is infinitely less like life for this'.⁶⁶ He therefore draws a distinction between gratuitous or superficial detail on the one hand and meaningful detail on the other.

When writing 'On Finish in Art', Stephens turned to the seven cartoons by Raphael illustrating scenes from the lives of Saint Peter the Apostle and Saint Paul, which were long revered as masterpieces of High Renaissance history painting that artists were taught to emulate.⁶⁷ In the mid-nineteenth century they could be seen at Hampton Court Palace, having been part of the Royal Collection since 1623.⁶⁸ Joshua Reynolds frequently mentioned them in his *Discourses on Art* (1769–90); in the fourth discourse on the 'grand style' in history painting delivered in 1771 he hailed the 'great nobleness' of the figure drawing, also remarking that Raphael had taken 'poetical licence' in portraying the Apostles in a heroic fashion which differed from the scriptural accounts of their appearances.⁶⁹ Ruskin did critique the Cartoons in the third volume of *Modern Painters* (1856), stating that although they had long been perceived as 'representations of historical fact', they were in fact 'cold arrangements of propriety and agreeableness, according to academical formulas, the painter never in any case making the slightest effort to conceive the thing as it really must have happened'.⁷⁰ Stephens had previously criticised the Cartoons in the second instalment of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', written in the summer of 1856 and published in October that year. Comparing the two naked boys in Raphael's *The Healing of the Lame Man* (1515–6; Fig. 74) with the figures of three children in the fresco of the *Miracolo del Calice*⁷¹ by a fifteenth-century Florentine artist, Cosimo

⁶⁵ Frederic George Stephens, 'Some Remarks Upon the Life of B. R. Haydon, Historical Painter. Second Article', *Crayon* (April 1856): 107, quoting Haydon's autobiography; John Lucas Tupper, 'Extracts from the Diary of an Artist. No. VI', *Crayon* (26 December 1855): 400.

⁶⁶ Stephens, 'On Finish', 198.

⁶⁷ Sir James Thornhill even painted full-size replicas of the Cartoons in 1729–31, which were proudly displayed in the Royal Academy and praised by artists including Benjamin West and Turner; <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/paul-preaching-in-the-areopagus> (accessed 5 November 2018).

⁶⁸ In 1865 the Cartoons were transferred on long-term loan to the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria & Albert Museum), where they remain today; <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/the-story-of-the-raphael-cartoons>.

⁶⁹ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (London: James Carpenter, 1842), 56–57.

⁷⁰ Ruskin, *Works*, 5:79.

⁷¹ In the Cappella del Miracolo (Miracle Chapel) in the Church of Sant' Ambrogio, Florence, 1481–6.

Rosselli (Fig. 75), he concluded that the former were ‘heavy and clumsy to the last degree [...] no one will assert that he ever saw such muscles on the back of an infant eight years old’. By contrast, Rosselli’s children possessed ‘the sweetest expression of innocence’ and a naturalistic vitality: ‘the girl herself leads both children by the hand, and while her robe is shaken by the wind, she looks out of the picture’. Stephens not only concluded that Raphael had been unjustly adored by ‘thousands’ while few admired Rosselli, but also questioned the widespread and long-held belief that Raphael ‘was a professed master of the art of drawing’, when Rosselli was ‘the greater and more just designer’.⁷²

Stephens agreed with Ruskin’s assertion that the Cartoons represented all that was wrong with ‘academical formulas’, but he took his criticism of the iconic paintings to a new extreme in ‘On Finish in Art’, analysing individual pictures in the series. He begins with a general overview of how the artist ‘rejected nature altogether’ in realising his designs:

[Raphael’s] draperies were no longer draperies, for they are frequently impossible in the forms of their casting; his faces often were outrageous violations of life [...] his clouds were no longer clouds, but heaps of preposterous wool-bags set in blue; his trees were no longer trees, but impossible contortions of black and dingy green: down from one low depth to a lower in feeling, he lost the truthful heart of his youth, and imposed upon a credulous dilettante world a dozen scowling ruffians for the Lord’s Apostles [...] He hung huge blankets upon their backs, and called the series Cartoons from the life of Christ.⁷³

Although this may give the impression of an angry young student railing against something just because it was highly respected, Stephens’s argument is grounded in a desire to scrutinise celebrated works of art with a fresh, objective eye, and to question received opinions. That most of his American readers would not have seen the Cartoons in person did not impede his argument; rather, he encouraged them ‘to take any good set of engravings from the Cartoons, and look at them fairly, divesting [themselves] from all conventional prejudices’.⁷⁴ This recalls Millais’s use of reproductive engravings to highlight the faults of Raphaellesque idealism in the portrait of Eliza and Sarah Wyatt (Fig. 71), mentioned earlier. At the end of the article ‘On Finish’ Stephens reflects that ‘it was desirable to comment upon a picture which is well known from engravings, in order to suggest the avoidance of several errors to those who may take the trouble to read this article’.⁷⁵ Stephens talks about the widespread circulation of Raphael’s paintings as if it was a contagion that must be

⁷² [Frederic George Stephens], ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms. Second Article’, *Crayon* (October 1856): 289.

⁷³ Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 199.

⁷⁴ Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 199.

⁷⁵ Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 203. The picture FGS was discussing was Raphael’s *St Catherine of Alexandria* (ca. 1507; National Gallery, London).

contained and hopefully cured.

Stephens may have felt that Americans, as citizens of a younger nation, would have been less burdened by the same inherited tastes and principles as in Britain and were more likely to approach his argument with an open mind. He used Raphael's tapestry designs as a case study for challenging the repetitiveness of academic influences and practices, despite the 'scornful laughter' which may greet such an attempt. '[I]t ill becomes any one to follow blindly the opinions of others if he have the power of deciding for himself, for the right of private judgement is given to all'.⁷⁶ For all this talk of balanced judgement, Stephens's motive is clear: he was hoping to disrupt the unerring popularity of Raphael and therefore justify the art of his fellow Pre-Raphaelites. He does so by prefacing his diatribe against the Cartoons with a description of Millais's *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* (1851; Fig. 76). As his readers were unable to access even an engraving of the original painting, Stephens recreated in prose the visual splendour of the 'hay carelessly tossed on the floor':

[T]his hay was one of the most extraordinary pieces of skilful execution that could ever have been looked upon; you saw the shadows of every blade of the perished grass, you saw where each one had got broken and folded, and twisted about its neighbour, you could perceive the dry, dull springiness of its quality, you saw the brown, scorched, the grey-faded and the half-withered green of its varied stages of decay. It is impossible to describe how finished this was, yet it was executed in a few hours, and passed from under the artist's hand a wonder, perfect and complete.

This layering of descriptive terms is a literary counterpart of the dense masses of hay in the foreground of Millais's painting. Each adjective – 'brown', 'scorched', 'grey-faded', 'half-withered' – corresponds with a particular detail which Stephens has observed.⁷⁷ Looking closely at the painting (Fig. 77) confirms his point. The use of a second-person voice also recreates the experience of looking at the picture when the reader had not been able to do so. It announces a precise, particularised prose style which is analogous to Pre-Raphaelite painting in that it prioritises detail over generalisation. Stephens was also perfecting this style in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', the subject of the next chapter.

If *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* was an example of masterly finish, the Raphael Cartoons represented a more troubling state of affairs. Looking at *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (Fig. 78), Stephens felt that the characterisation of the fishermen sitting 'calmly' in their boats did not

⁷⁶ Ibid., 200.

⁷⁷ Ruskin had written admiringly of the 'freedom of execution' with which Millais painted the hay in his letter to the *Times* on 30 May 1851, arguing that this quality was 'a modern excellence'.

adequately reflect the profundity of the miraculous event taking place before them.⁷⁸ In his view, the ‘figures which are hauling in the nets are intent only upon the spoil, and he alone who has stepped from one boat into the other [the central figure in green] seems to feel the slightest emotion’.⁷⁹ Stephens would have been mindful of Pre-Raphaelite religious subjects such as Hunt’s *A Converted British Family* (1850–1; Fig. 79). Hunt’s painting similarly deploys a horizontal arrangement of dynamic figures, but was more emotionally charged than Raphael’s cartoon, as Stephens wrote in ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’: ‘The missionary sits pale and fainting, [...] while a boy listens with his ear to the earth for the footsteps of the pursuers [...] The limbs of the escaped tremble with exhaustion’.⁸⁰ Thus, the vivid characterisation of the missionary and the early Christian family is in keeping with the dramatic tension of the subject. This also carried implications for the artists themselves. Where Hunt’s work was ‘the result of powerful thinking and earnest concentrated intention’, Raphael’s suffered from ‘a feeling which had become utterly vitiated from long indulgence’.⁸¹ Stephens goes on to discuss this matter at length in ‘On Finish in Art?’, suggesting the correlation between the artist’s laziness and sensuality and the corrupted age in which he lived.

Stephens’s denunciation of Raphael was therefore not limited to aesthetics: there were also moral implications for his rejection of nature and imprecise technique. As Prettejohn has demonstrated, Ruskin had ‘denounced contemporary painters for lax technical methods, described in overtly moralising language’, in his review of Charles Eastlake’s *Materials for a History of Oil Painting* in the *Quarterly Review* in March 1848, not long before the formation of the PRB.⁸² Ruskin declared that the more rigorous painting methods of the early Italian and Northern artists combined ‘the patience of a mechanic’ with ‘the foresight of a magician’, while most nineteenth-century artists had succumbed to ‘a practice which evades law, discredits application, [and] despises system’.⁸³ Prettejohn allows that it is not known whether the future members of the PRB read Ruskin’s review. Nevertheless, Stephens’s contributions to the *Germ* in 1850 demonstrate, in Prettejohn’s words, ‘a

⁷⁸ The cartoon illustrates Luke 5:1–11.

⁷⁹ Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 200.

⁸⁰ [Frederic George Stephens], ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms. Third Article (Concluded)’, *Crayon* (December 1856): 353.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 353; Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 200.

⁸² Prettejohn, *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 147.

⁸³ Ruskin, *Works*, 12:283–84.

conviction as firm as Ruskin's' early in his writing career. In his essay on 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art' he declared that the arts could be used to measure the supremacy of the 'true spirit' in one historical period (that of the early Italian artists), followed by a swift decline into moral degradation in another (that of Raphael and his followers). In a lyrical passage, Stephens uses a metaphor of the seasons to describe the birth, growth, maturation and death of the arts in 'each period' and in 'every school', a cycle that is deemed inevitable. The 'winter' of painting, in particular, was characterised by 'exaggerated action, conventionalism, gaudy colour, false sentiment, voluptuousness, and poverty of invention', beneath which lay '[c]orruption' which would 'degrade and sensualise, instead of chasten and render pure, the humanity it was instructed to elevate'. The artists who promoted this degraded, sensualised style had therefore 'descended from their high seat, fallen from the priest to the mere parasite, from the law-giver to the mere courtier'.⁸⁴ This passage demonstrates Stephens's conviction that a work of art should convey a moral message, and should educate and enrich the society in which it is produced by promoting a culture of truth, purity and simplicity, as had apparently been the case with late-medieval and Quattrocento painters. As was shown earlier in this chapter, Stephens also believed that Jan van Eyck embodied this quality.

If Stephens did not name Raphael as the catalyst for an artistic 'winter' in the *Germ*, he made his point clear in 'On Finish in Art', continuing this argument with a renewed zeal. For him, the Cartoons were 'expressive of a feeling which had become utterly vitiated from long indulgence, and show[ed] how [Raphael] fell from the place of the one of the greatest minds which have had a throne in Art'. Stephens repeats the word 'fell' at several other points in the article, thereby evoking the Fall of Man – an archetypal narrative of truth, purity and simplicity declining into corruption. Raphael's biography is reframed as a kind of parable: the painter, in his youth, abandoned the 'simple and pure style' of his master, Pietro Perugino, in about 1500, and in doing so 'neglected that nature, which his predecessors always insisted upon as the groundwork of Art'. According to Stephens, Raphael embraced a life of commercial gain – 'the false facility by which he could execute great works, [...] [and] accomplish the immense commissions he received'. The Cartoons were therefore the product of 'decadence', which Stephens defines:

[T]he decadence which took place in the practice of Art, immediately the great painters (here, as elsewhere,

⁸⁴ Stephens, 'Early Italian Art', 63.

represented by the person of Raphael), chose to abandon the study of individual nature for every object in their pictures, and relying upon their own memories and acquired knowledge, cast disdainfully aside the fetters of fact to revel in delusive freedom, which only led deeper and deeper into a new slough of falsehood and error; until the arts, instead of being a vehicle of Christian delight, became little else than attendants upon a heathen procession of Phallus-worshippers and the perpetrators of Pagan ceremonies and obscene delights.⁸⁵

The faults of the methods previously described in the article could therefore be read in moral terms.

Readers of the earlier *Germ* articles might have recognised the ‘new slough of falsehood and error’ as a sinister reversal of the ‘new channel [...] [of] pure transcripts and faithful studies from nature’ which Pre-Raphaelitism is described as having forged in ‘The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art’.⁸⁶ A ‘channel’ indicates progress, like a stretch of water leading to the open sea, while a ‘slough’ – meaning both a swamp and a situation characterised by lack of progress or activity – suggests moral and artistic stagnation. The reference to ‘Phallus-worshippers’ and ‘obscene delights’ is an insensitive attack on both the homosexuality of High Renaissance artists such as Leonardo and Michelangelo, and the excessive passions of Raphael noted by Vasari in his *Lives of the Artists*. Christina Rossetti explored a similar theme in her short story ‘The Lost Titian’, mentioned earlier, in which Titian succumbs to the vices of drink and gambling and loses ‘the masterpiece of his life’. It is also an apparent attack on the revival of classical art, considered ‘heathen’ and ‘Pagan’, as opposed to the purer conceptions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In conclusion, the two overlooked publications by Stephens from the *Crayon* discussed in this chapter enrich our understanding of the Pre-Raphaelites’ attitudes towards the historical artists they both admired and abjured. The short story ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ presents a sympathetic – though fictionalised – portrayal of Jan van Eyck who studied nature closely and faithfully translated it into his paintings. It also crafts a literary response to a specific painting, the *Arnolfini Portrait*, which fascinated the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and which they attempted to emulate in their own paintings. Conversely, the essay ‘On Finish’ denounces the work of the PRB’s namesake, Raphael, on the grounds of intellectual and artistic indolence, as embodied in the famed *Cartoons*. Stephens directly challenged the idolisation of Raphael in the Academy and asked his American readers to question received opinions, rather than blindly following established tastes. His

⁸⁵ Stephens, ‘On Finish’, 200.

⁸⁶ Stephens, ‘Early Italian Art’, 58.

writings therefore expressed Pre-Raphaelite ideals in the mid-1850s in more detail than ever before. This was also the motivation behind his important series of articles for the *Crayon*, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’: A Pre-Raphaelite Series

The previous chapter examined some of Stephens’s shorter publications in the *Crayon* in the mid-1850s. This chapter will focus on his most substantial contribution to that periodical: ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’, a series of eight papers elucidating the origins, aims and artworks of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and some of their associates, published between August 1856 and December 1857.¹ Despite its importance as a primary text for understanding the origins and development of Pre-Raphaelite art, Stephens’s series has not been examined in its entirety by scholars. It is absent from the anthologies of Pre-Raphaelite texts, such as Inga Bryden’s four-volume *Pre-Raphaelites: Writings and Sources* (1998), and has not been reprinted since the 1850s. Mary Susan Duval’s 1988 thesis briefly discusses the series, recognising Stephens’s attempt ‘to win the reader over to a consideration of the significance and relevance of [Pre-Raphaelitism]’, but does not explore his ideas in any detail.² More recent scholarship has become increasingly aware that the series provides useful insights into Pre-Raphaelite art theory at a relatively early point in the movement. John Holmes’s *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* (2018) quotes from the series in order to demonstrate Stephens’s engagement with contemporary science when describing modern Pre-Raphaelite art.³ In this chapter I will assert ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ as a key primary text beyond the usual sources such as the *Germ*.

At its publication, the series was the longest sustained analysis of the Pre-Raphaelite project written by one of its founding members since 1848. What distinguishes ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ from other early Pre-Raphaelite texts, such as W. M. Rossetti’s article on ‘Pre-Raphaelitism’ published in the *Spectator* in 1851, is that Stephens merges art history with art criticism and attempts to establish a permeable connection between early Italian painting and modern Pre-Raphaelitism. It is worth repeating Rossetti’s reminiscence about Stephens’s ‘great liking for the early schools of art,

¹ [Frederic George Stephens], ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’, *Crayon* (1856): 225–8 (August), 289–92 (October), 321–4 (November), 353–6 (December); (1857): 261–5 (September), 298–302 (October), 325–9 (November), 361–3 (December). The November and December 1857 articles are signed with the initials ‘L. L.’, for reasons unknown.

² Duval, ‘Stephens’, 49.

³ John Holmes, *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 25–26, 173.

Italian and other. Possibly his knowledge of them exceeded that of any other PRB'.⁴ Indeed, the first two instalments of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' are devoted to painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries including Giotto, Benozzo Gozzoli, Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, Masaccio, Orcagna, Luca Signorelli and Botticelli.⁵ Stephens was therefore building upon his first essay in the *Germ* in 1850, 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art'. He sought to place contemporary Pre-Raphaelite painting within a legitimate historical context, tracing a line of creativity from Quattrocento Italy to mid-nineteenth-century London. He was also describing artworks by Millais, Hunt, D. G. Rossetti, Woolner and other modern artists for a new American audience who had not yet had a chance to see original Pre-Raphaelite works in person.

Stephens was writing during a volatile period in the ongoing development of Pre-Raphaelitism. As has already been mentioned at several points in this thesis, the PRB as a static, unified group of artists had all but disintegrated by 1853, and its practitioners were beginning to diverge stylistically from one another. Stephens remained socially connected with all of them, and the insights he gained into their work were articulated in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (with the exception of Collinson, whose paintings go unmentioned). Concomitant with this fragmentation of the original Brotherhood in the mid-1850s was the emergence of a new mode of painting which favoured aesthetic beauty over stringent narratives and moralistic content, and in which some members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle began to take an interest. Elizabeth Prettejohn has explored this issue in her book *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (2008), rightly arguing that it is difficult to pinpoint the precise transition from Pre-Raphaelitism into Aestheticism; 'the two movements overlap and encompass each other'.⁶ Prettejohn highlights Millais's painting *Autumn Leaves* (Fig. 80) and D. G. Rossetti's watercolour *The Blue Closet* (Fig. 81) as examples of 'Aestheticism in the midst of Pre-Raphaelitism' in the mid-1850s.⁷ Broadly speaking, these pictures eschewed clearly defined narratives and underlying moral messages in favour of evoking a particular mood or atmosphere,

⁴ William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols. (London: Ellis, 1895), 1:132.

⁵ [William Michael Rossetti], 'Pre-Raphaelitism', *Spectator* (4 October 1851): 955–57. Reprinted in William Michael Rossetti, *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary* (London: Macmillan, 1867), 168–77.

⁶ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

which they achieved through sensual colour harmonies and enigmatic, poetic compositions.

By contrast, Hunt remained on a steady course of realism, travelling to the Holy Land to paint meticulous landscapes and historically authentic religious subjects, such as *The Scapegoat*, *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* and *The Afterglow in Egypt*, all of which were commenced in 1854 and either completed or still in progress by 1856 when the first four instalments of Stephens's 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' were published in America. At this time Stephens himself was working on *Mother and Child*, a modern-life scene which, as Chapter 5 demonstrated, commented on the plight of middle-class women and children during the Crimean War. Therefore, although the title 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' implies a neat symmetry between past and present, the situation in the present was rather more complicated than Stephens might have liked. His series bears signs of the conflict between 'true' Pre-Raphaelitism on the one hand and an emergent Aestheticism on the other. This conflict became manifested in the prose itself, as Stephens found himself caught between painstakingly conveying the message of the established Pre-Raphaelite creed, and attempting to describe pictures which were visibly deviating from the central tenets of the group. In this way, Stephens's series is important for understanding the Pre-Raphaelite mindset in the midst of a period of radical aesthetic change.

'Two Clusters of Intellectual Stars': Defining the Two Pre-Raphaelitisms

Stephens wrote to W. M. Rossetti about his intentions for the series on 24 April 1856:

I intended [...] to make an article on, and to be called, 'The Two Preraffaelitisms', showing what the old one was, the sins which [ruined?] it – what the modern is, and its objects. To draw a comparison between individuals in both, and to show the relations of each to its era. This was originally the intended sequence of the Germ papers of mine, but my own indolence and the bother of the whole affair prevented me from working them together, so that I am contrived to let them appear unconnectedly when I might have made them in a kind of unison. I never thought of republishing the papers as they stand; – but with great abbreviations and modifications of their present state; I intended to set them, as it were, into one article with much additional matter, at least as much again.⁸

This letter suggests that Stephens had been contemplating a lengthy treatment of the Pre-Raphaelite project since at least September 1849, when he began writing his essay on early Italian art for the *Germ*.⁹ By May 1856, one article had multiplied ambitiously to three, as Stephens explained to John

⁸ ADC, Box 14, Folder 7.

⁹ See Chapter 4 for an explanation of FGS's *Germ* articles.

Durand:

I propose to make three papers on this subject – the second to continue the matter of the first, and to draw [sic] a comparison between the earlier and later Italian Schools. The third to treat of the origin, history and object of the modern school of Pre-Raphaelites, which I have peculiar facilities for doing, as I am, and have been, since the formation of the Brotherhood, on the most intimate terms with the leading members. I propose to describe and comment on many of their pictures. This is what has never been done in Europe, or, I believe, in America.¹⁰

Stephens was thus offering Durand a unique literary opportunity, as the *Crayon*'s readers could be the first to read a reflective account of the Pre-Raphaelite project written by someone 'on the most intimate terms' with it. His wish was to locate the modern Pre-Raphaelites within a historical context, devoting two-thirds of the articles to the historical Italian art which inspired the modern Pre-Raphaelites 'school', as he styled it. William Michael forwarded the first part of Stephens's series to John Durand in late-May 1856.¹¹ Writing to Durand at this time, Stephens acknowledged that some portions of the article had previously appeared in the *Germ*.¹²

The first instalment of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' in August 1856 is prefaced with a lengthy extract from Robert Browning's dramatic monologue 'Fra Lippo Lippi' (lines 280–93), which had been published the previous year. The fifteenth-century Italian artist Filippo Lippi preaches the importance of painting directly and faithfully from nature, rather than idealising God's creations. By quoting Browning, Stephens is able to draw a parallel between the ideals of an actual pre-Raphaelite painter and those of the modern Pre-Raphaelites, as filtered through the words of a contemporary poem. The first sentence continues this theme:

There have been two Pre-Raphaelitisms, one old and the other new; and as there has been much misunderstanding respecting both, and much animadversion upon the latter, let us see if we cannot endeavour to explain their nature, and, perhaps, justify them a little.¹³

Ruskin had declared in his 1851 pamphlet on *Pre-Raphaelitism* that 'there is not a shadow of resemblance' between authentic early Italian and modern Pre-Raphaelite pictures, but that the latter equal the former in their 'skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and grace of effect' and the fact that the Pre-Raphaelites 'paint from Nature only'.¹⁴ David Masson, writing in the *British Quarterly Review* in 1852, also posed the question of whether there was 'any actual resemblance between the

¹⁰ FGS to Durand, 27 May 1856, JDP.

¹¹ FGS to WMR, 14 June 1856, JDP: 'You forwarded on my account the first of a series of Papers on Pre-Raphaelitism'.

¹² FGS to Durand, 27 May 1856, JDP.

¹³ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 225.

¹⁴ John Ruskin, *Pre-Raphaelitism. By the Author of 'Modern Painters'* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1851), 27.

modern Pre-Raphaelite paintings and the paintings of the early Italian school as works of pictorial art'.¹⁵ Stephens aimed to clarify these points in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' by imagining an art critic 'some thousand years into the future' looking through a telescope to behold 'two clusters of intellectual stars [...] entering the field of his glass at the same time, both of them bearing the same name, and somewhat resembling each other'. The critic would be surprised to discover, however, that the two clusters are positioned 'four hundred years apart'.¹⁶ Stephens uses an astronomical term, 'parallax', to describe this curious phenomenon: the difference or change in the apparent position or direction of an object as seen from two different points.¹⁷ In this case the 'object' is Pre-Raphaelitism: a set of artistic principles which were adopted by two groups of artists, each from a different historical and geographical point – medieval Italy on the one hand, Victorian London on the other. However, according to the 'parallax' definition, the object in question will appear different from each point; thus, the Pre-Raphaelitism of the nineteenth century is noticeably different from that of the Middle Ages, as Ruskin and Masson recognised. Indeed, like Ruskin, Stephens declares that the two groups only 'somewhat' resemble each other, rather than the modern group directly imitating the earlier. Nevertheless, the overarching principle of 'truth to nature' remains the same for both.

Despite commenting on the potential differences between these two groups of artists, Stephens also blurs the boundaries between them. The art-critic-astronomer from the future, looking closer at one of the clusters of stars, would find 'a group of eight or more men' who were able to produce 'by the force, earnestness, and fire of their own minds' pictures which were 'superior to any of their successors'.¹⁸ Although Stephens is referring to the early Italians here, he could just as easily be describing the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848. The vigorous language used to describe the Italian mindset – 'force', 'earnestness', 'fire' – recalls the Brotherhood's fervent attempts to express their cause, such as when they brainstormed possible titles for their magazine in December 1849: 'The Chariot', 'The Effort', 'The Accelerator', 'Earnest Thoughts'.¹⁹ Stephens's characterisation of the early Italian painters as historical counterparts of the PRB is not without its problems. Whereas

¹⁵ [David Masson], 'Pre-Raphaelitism in Art and Literature', *British Quarterly Review* (August 1852), 208.

¹⁶ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 225.

¹⁷ Definition from the OED.

¹⁸ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 225.

¹⁹ *PRBJ*, 114–15.

the modern Pre-Raphaelites banded together to form a self-conscious group, the medieval artists were entirely unaware that they *were* ‘pre-Raphaelites’, and they did not consciously work under any particular, self-selected principles. Moreover, Stephens is projecting his own motives and those of his fellow PRBs onto the past; it is impossible to know if the early artists really were, ‘without exception, grave, thoughtful, and earnest men’. In this way Stephens follows Browning’s example; poems such as ‘Fra Lippo Lippi’, ‘Pictor Ignotus’ and ‘Andrea del Sarto’, all of which were published in the collection *Men and Women* in 1855, are psychological portraits of historical Italian artists which give voice to emotions imagined by Browning himself.

Describing the Early Italians: Reproductions and Rediscoveries

Having introduced his theme of Pre-Raphaelitism as a mode of artistic expression practiced by two clusters of artists, one past and one present, Stephens describes a generous selection of paintings produced by the earlier group in the first and second articles of his series. Some of these pictures had previously been mentioned in the *Germ*, while several others were being examined by Stephens for the first time. Rather than summarising these descriptions, it is worth highlighting a recurrent theme of this earlier, historical portion of ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’: Stephens’s dependence on reproductions of works by the early Italian masters as the basis for his visual analyses. In the first article he expresses the difficulty of describing paintings ‘without engravings to illustrate our meaning’; to do so was ‘much like an attempt to represent Niagara by upsetting a water-cart’.²⁰ This theme is continued in the second article: ‘To *instruct* the reader the present writer is scarcely competent, his knowledge being mainly derived from the villainous engravings in Rosini’s “*Storia della Pittura*”, and those scarcely superior in d’Agincourt’s “*Histoire de l’Art par les Monumens*”’.²¹ Stephens previously cited these titles by Giovanni Rosini and Seroux d’Agincourt in a footnote to his essay on early Italian art in the *Germ* in 1850, demonstrating his art historical practices.²² While he did not express an opinion of them at that time, by the mid-1850s his judgements had matured and he was able to write more critically about the fact that the engravings were a detriment to one’s

²⁰ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 225.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 289.

²² Stephens, ‘Early Italian Art’, 62; see also Chapter 4.

appreciation of early Italian art.

Instead, Stephens recommends a different book which he appears to have just discovered: *Galleria dell'I. e Reale Accademia Belle Arti di Firenze* ('It is usually known in England by the name of "Outlines from the Florentine Galleries"'), published in Florence in 1845 and by Hering and Remington in London.²³ The sixty plates in this 'admirable work', as he termed it, were created by thirty Italian draughtsmen and engravers; Stephens sang their praises, declaring that the book's 'beautifully-executed prints may well put to shame the puny efforts which are made in England to illustrate the works of the great Florentine masters'.²⁴ These masters included Giotto, Fra Angelico, Botticelli, Masaccio, Cimabue and Fra Filippo Lippi.²⁵

The reliance upon reproductions of early Italian paintings in lieu of the original works themselves is familiar in the Pre-Raphaelite literature. Hunt, Millais and D. G. Rossetti encountering Carlo Lasinio's engravings from frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa one evening at Millais's home is a familiar incident in the development of Pre-Raphaelitism. The 'discovery' of the engravings was recounted first by Hunt in 1886, and then again by Stephens in his 1894 monograph on Rossetti.²⁶ Prettejohn has recognised Hunt's use of Lasinio's book 'as a concrete symbol of the shift in direction proposed for the new alliance', noting also that 'no later account of the Pre-Raphaelite movement has omitted the anecdote about the Campo Santo volume'.²⁷ Also recognised by scholars is Rossetti's excitement when he acquired a copy of Camille Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques des XIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XV Siècles* in 1849, as he declared in a letter to Stephens.²⁸ Bonnard's book presented colour reproductions of figures traced from medieval paintings and manuscripts; scholars have already

²³ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 291, which misspells the title as *Galleria delle l. e. reale Accademia, delle belle Arti*.

²⁴ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 291. Stephens would return to the issue of the feebleness of English reproductive engravings when compared with equivalents on the Continent in his article on 'Cheap Art', *Macmillan's Magazine* 1, no. 1 (November 1859): 46–54.

²⁵ The 30 artists, as they appear in the book, are: Cimabue, Giotto, School of Giotto, Buffalmacco, Taddeo Gaddi, Giovanni di Milano, Niccolò di Pietro, Spinello Aretino, Lorenzo di Niccolò, Lorenzo Monaco, Masolino da Panicale, Gentile da Fabriano, Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, Masaccio, Andrea del Castagno, Cosimo Rosselli, Andrea del Pollaiuolo, Francesco Pesellino, Andrea del Verrocchio, Sandro Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Lorenzo di Credi, Pietro Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo, Mariotto Albertinelli, Francesco Granacci, Raffaello Sanzio, Andrea del Sarto.

²⁶ William Holman Hunt, 'The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Fight for Art. I', *Contemporary Review* 49 (April 1886): 480; Stephens, *Rossetti*, 16–17.

²⁷ Prettejohn, *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, 28.

²⁸ DGR to FGS, 7 September 1849, in *CDGR*, 1:89: 'Now for a grand piece of news. My dear P.R.B. I have got Bonnard!!! – a most stunning copy too, with india proof impressions' (MS: FGSP).

demonstrated how the Pre-Raphaelite artists plundered it for historical patterns and costumes to use in their pictures.²⁹

Less addressed, however, is the ambiguity of whether the young PRBs were marvelling at the original Italian frescoes or the modern reproductions of them. It was more likely the former, but in ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ Stephens admits the possible pitfalls of judging or evaluating historical artworks by their modern reproductions. For example, the copy of Andrea del Castagno’s *St Jerome* in the *Outlines from the Florentine Galleries* (Fig. 82), drawn by E. Lapi and engraved by F. Livy, compelled Stephens to reconsider his opinion of the artist’s work, as it presented ‘a quality of fine drawing which *our previous knowledge of his work* [my emphasis] would not lead us to expect’. An engraving of Castagno’s *Crucifixion with Saints* had featured in Rosini’s ‘villainous’ *Storia della Pittura Italia* (Fig. 83), admittedly cruder and less expressive than Fig. 82; furthermore, there were no original works by Castagno in a British collection which Stephens could have seen. He thus issues a cautionary tale of ‘how the observer may be misled by indifferent engravings’.³⁰ This issue is further elaborated in the same article, in relation to the work of Fra Angelico. The following passage may come as a surprise to Pre-Raphaelite scholars, given the painter-monk’s presence in the PRB’s list of ‘Immortals’ with one star beside his name:

Fra Angelico is a name so renowned [...] that we fear we shall get small credit for saying what is nevertheless the truth, that generally in looking at his works, as engraved, we are more inclined to smile than to abandon ourselves to the raptures of admiration which his critics generally give way to. It may be either that the prints from his pictures are so bad, either by some stray chance which has brought more of that ill-fortune to his share than befalls the other painters; or probably there are none, so say his extreme admirers, the purity and angelic character of whose paintings it is so difficult to reproduce even a faint reflection as of his. For our own part we can but say that, with the exception of the ‘Coronation of the Virgin’, and a picture we are about to mention, we have never seen any of his works but which are such as we turn gently aside from without interest.³¹

Here, Stephens addresses the uneasy relationship between a historical artwork and its modern reproduction, the former at the mercy of the copyists who produce the latter. He accepts the difficulties of replicating the subtleties of Angelico’s paintings in a monochromatic engraving, but is uncertain

²⁹ Roger Smith, ‘Bonnard’s Costume Historique – a Pre-Raphaelite Source Book’, *Costume* 7, no. 1 (1973): 23–37; Gail S. Weinberg, ‘Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “Salutation of Beatrice” and Camille Bonnard’s “Costumes Historiques”’, *Burlington Magazine* 141, no. 1159 (October 1999): 622–23; Eriko Yamaguchi, ‘Rossetti’s Use of Bonnard’s “Costumes Historique”’: A Further Examination, with an Appendix on Other Pre-Raphaelite Artists’, *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 9 (Fall 2000): 5–36.

³⁰ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 291. I have been unable to identify the original painting of *St Jerome* by Castagno which Lapi and Livy reproduced.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 291. There are two notable versions of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Angelico: one in the Uffizi (ca. 1432) and another in the Louvre, Paris (1434–5). Neither are reproduced in *Outlines from the Florentine Galleries*.

whether to attribute any perceived shortcomings to Angelico himself or to the engravers, who attempted to adhere as faithfully to the originals as possible. This issue of the artwork and its reproduction in the nineteenth century has been much discussed by art historians, such as Robert Verhoogt, who has addressed the ‘ambiguity’ experienced by a nineteenth-century viewer of facsimiles: ‘Sometimes when they looked at a reproduction, they “saw” the original work, other times they perceived the specific graphic interpretation itself’.³² Stephens seemingly found it hard, in the case of Fra Angelico, to separate one from the other, particularly as he had never seen any authentic paintings by the artist in person. He was at least able to distinguish between a good reproduction and an ‘indifferent’ one.

The other picture by Angelico which Stephens mentions is the *Betrayal of Judas (Judas Taking the Thirty Pieces of Silver)*, from the *Scenes from the Life of Christ* panel series now in the Museo di San Marco in Florence (1451–2), which was reproduced in the *Outlines* (Fig. 84). It illustrates Matthew 26:14–16, when Judas Iscariot goes to the chief priests and agrees to betray Christ’s location in exchange for thirty silver coins. ‘[I]t is very fine indeed, and full of dramatic power’, Stephens writes, before going on to analyse the interaction between the money giver, ‘drawing back in full scorn’, and Judas, ‘whose besotted face is admirable’. For Stephens, the psychological tension between the two figures is a prime example of Angelico’s ‘power of dramatic design, such as may show a knowledge of human life, and have a little human interest, quite a different thing from the seraphic manifestations for which he has so much glory’.³³ This last comment is evidently aimed at the ‘extreme admirers’ of Angelico mentioned above. Ruskin in particular praised the Florentine painter throughout his writings, and the general index of his works shows a penchant for Angelico’s images of angels and saints.³⁴ In the third volume of *Modern Painters*, published earlier that year in 1856, Ruskin declared that for ‘purity of expression, Angelico will stand the highest’, and also hymned the artist’s method of distinguishing between ‘heavenly beings and those of this world [...] With exquisite choice of gesture, and disposition

³² R. M. Verhoogt, ‘Free Access to the History of Art: Art Reproduction and the Appropriation of the History of Art in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture’, in *Free Access to the Past: Romanticism, Cultural Heritage and the Nation*, eds. Lotte Eilskov Jensen, Joseph Theodoor Leerssen and Marita Mathijsen (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 156–57. See also Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction: Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israëls and Ary Scheffer* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

³³ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 291. There is no evidence that FGS had visited Paris when by this time; he appears to have first visited the city in 1867, when reviewing the Exposition Universelle for the *Athenaeum*.

³⁴ See Ruskin, *Works*, 39:13–14 (entry for Fra Angelico in the general index).

of folds of drapery, this mode of treatment gives [...] the best idea of spiritual beings which the human mind is capable of forming. It is, therefore, a true ideal'.³⁵

It is telling that one of the few pictures by Fra Angelico which Stephens is able to 'regard with feeling' is devoid of the 'spiritual beings' that Ruskin so admired, but depicts a moment of human drama with which the viewer can engage. Looking closely at the engraving of the *Betrayal of Judas* by G. Turchi and G. Bonaini in the *Outlines* (Fig. 84), we witness a variety of emotions unfolding within the distinct groupings of characters, with a focus on the central action of the haloed Judas receiving the silver coins. He reaches out keenly to accept them, wearing a smug, narrow-eyed expression. As Stephens points out, the money giver appears hesitant and 'full of scorn', proffering the coins with one hand but tugging his robe closer around himself with the other, as if inwardly desiring to withdraw from the transaction. Stephens was already familiar with human hands being used to articulate internal conflict: in his painting *The Proposal* (Fig. 4), extensively discussed in Chapter 3, Griselda's left hand is grasped by the Marquis Walter in a symbolic gesture of her fateful marriage to him, while with her right hand she hides her outdoor hat behind her back, indicating her inner desire for freedom which she is forced to suppress. Just as Stephens fleshed out the basic facts of Chaucer's poem by adding psychological details, so did Fra Angelico add 'human interest' to the basic biblical account of Judas's betrayal by portraying the money-giving priest locked in a crisis of conscience.

Another artist whose work Stephens saw in the *Outlines* and praised in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' was Sandro Botticelli. F. Livy's engraving of Botticelli's monumental *Coronation of the Virgin* (also known as the *San Marco Altarpiece*; Uffizi, Florence; 1490–2) thrilled Stephens, who called it the 'great jewel' of the book (Fig. 85). A Pre-Raphaelite tribute to Botticelli at this early date, 1856, is not insignificant. As Prettejohn has demonstrated, the 'rediscovery' of Botticelli in the nineteenth century by the likes of Ruskin, Pater, Swinburne, D. G. Rossetti and Burne-Jones has been extensively explored by scholars.³⁶ Gail S. Weinberg has noted that both Ruskin and Pater claimed credit for this 'rediscovery', although neither wrote anything significant about Botticelli until the

³⁵ Ruskin, *Works*, 5:66 and 104–5.

³⁶ See Prettejohn, *Modern Painters*, 147–66, and bibliography, 271–72; Michael Levy, 'Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 nos. 3–4 (July–December 1960): 291–306; Mark Evans and Stefan Weppelmann, *Botticelli Reimagined* (London: V&A Publishing, 2016).

1870s.³⁷ Stephens's modest contribution to this growing phenomenon – a paragraph-long description of Botticelli's *Coronation of the Virgin* in the *Crayon* in 1856 – has been overlooked, and is worth briefly examining here in order to further understand the Pre-Raphaelites' literary response to a Quattrocento artist who would become increasingly influential as the century progressed.

For Stephens 'the great feature of the painting is a ring of angels dancing in ecstasy round the Throne of God, a chorus of angels in the most rapid motion, with tossing hair wheeling as they do, hand in hand, their draperies flying'.³⁸ The structure of Stephens's description, moving from one fragmented visual detail to the next, reflects the rhythmical movement of the angels encircling God and the Virgin. The angels' linked hands lead the eye from left to right, then to the semi-circular arch of winged cherub heads around the upper edge of the composition, then back to the beginning, in a circular movement. Stephens expresses regret that he only had words at his disposal to convey the picture's 'wonderfully successful rendering of rapid motion, what fire, what eloquence, what spirit, what variety there is in this most astonishing work of art [...] This picture alone should place Botticelli on the very highest pinnacle of art'. In this regard Stephens certainly anticipates the enthusiasm for Botticelli's work in subsequent decades, as expressed in the paintings of D. G. Rossetti and Burne-Jones and Pater's laudatory 'A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli' first published fourteen years later in 1870.³⁹ As is well known, Rossetti purchased a painting by Botticelli, *Portrait of a Lady Known as 'Smeralda Bandinelli'* (ca. 1470–5) in 1867.⁴⁰ In 1880 he also wrote a sonnet 'For Spring, by Sandro Botticelli', a response to the famous *Primavera (Spring)* now in the Uffizi (in 1880 the painting was still in the Accademia in Florence). Like Stephens in the mid-1850s, Rossetti was drawn to Botticelli's graceful depiction of movement:

Aurora, Zephyrus, with mutual cheer
Of clasp and kiss: the Graces circling near,
'Neath bower-linked arch of white arms glorified.⁴¹

Rossetti had never seen Botticelli's *Primavera* in person, but based his ekphrastic poem on a photographic reproduction he received in 1879, which left him with the same impression of 'rapid

³⁷ Gail S. Weinberg, 'Ruskin, Pater, and the Rediscovery of Botticelli', *Burlington Magazine* 129, no. 1006 (January 1987): 26.

³⁸ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 291.

³⁹ Walter Pater, 'A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli', *Fortnightly Review* 8, no. 44 (1 August 1870): 155–60.

⁴⁰ Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (CAI.100), having been bequeathed in 1901 by Constantine Alexander Ionides, who bought it from DGR in 1880.

⁴¹ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'For Spring, by Sandro Botticelli (in the Accademia of Florence)', in *Ballads and Sonnets* (London: F. S. Ellis, 1881), 312.

motion' that the angels in the *Coronation of the Virgin* inspired in Stephens. The three Graces 'circling near' on the left of *Primavera*, their arms 'bower-linked' in a rising, falling rhythm like an 'arch', echo the 'ring of angels dancing in ecstasy, [...] hand in hand' in the *Coronation*, as described by Stephens.

Stephens was not alone in recognising Botticelli in the mid-1850s: indeed, four months earlier the *Crayon* had published a letter from W. M. Rossetti, dated 20 May 1856, noting the National Gallery's recent acquisition of a picture by a 'painter of the earlier time, hitherto unknown'. It was a Virgin and Child subject by Botticelli, which for Rossetti demonstrated the artist's 'strong clear colour, his hard contours, and his naturalist tendency'.⁴² Whether Stephens or Rossetti was the first Pre-Raphaelite to 'rediscover' Botticelli is not only impossible to verify, but somewhat beside the point, as Prettejohn has pointed out: 'Less important than who was "first" [...] may be the way that the interest in Botticelli was shared [...] towards the end of the 1860s' (in this case, the 1850s).⁴³ Together, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' and Rossetti's 'Art News' demonstrate that Botticelli's work was being appreciated in different ways: not only in person in the National Gallery, but also in reproduction.

'The Painful Pencil': Introducing Modern Pre-Raphaelitism

In the third instalment of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' published in November 1856, Stephens at last shifts the focus to the modern Pre-Raphaelites who have 'attempted to carry out the work in the spirit which animated their elder namesakes'.⁴⁴ After introducing the original Brotherhood to his American readers, he remarks that of its five painter members 'three have now distinguished names, which are known wherever English Art is spoken of': Millais, Hunt and D. G. Rossetti (the other two were, of course, himself and Collinson).⁴⁵ Stephens then summarises what he feels are the defining characteristics of each painter. Millais 'possessed a singularly brilliant dramatic power, with a wonderful gift of colour'; Hunt, 'a concentrated, solid, earnest vigour, with a more complete system of execution than either of the others'; Rossetti, 'a genius of extraordinary calibre, delighting chiefly

⁴² William Michael Rossetti, 'Art News from England. Letter XV [20 May 1856]', *Crayon* 3, no. 7 (July 1856): 211. The National Gallery purchased two subjects of this kind in 1855, *The Virgin and Child with St John and Two Angels* (NG226) and *The Virgin and Child with St John and an Angel* (NG275), and none in 1856, so it is hard to know which version WMR is referring to. Both works have since been reattributed to Botticelli's workshop.

⁴³ Prettejohn, *Modern Painters*, 151.

⁴⁴ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 321.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 321.

in subtle and spiritual subjects which seem to fit no other hand'. Therefore, although these artists belonged to the same group, Stephens acknowledges the aesthetic differences between them: Millais's literary and historical subjects rich with narrative, such as *Mariana*, *The Order of Release* and *A Huguenot*; Hunt's programme of combining 'solid' realism with moral and spiritual earnestness, exemplified in *A Christian Missionary*, *The Awakening Conscience* and *The Light of the World*; and Rossetti's dreamlike medieval watercolours and 'primitive' Christian designs which, Stephens recognises, were 'less well known than those by his brethren' because they had never been publicly exhibited. Nevertheless, Stephens emphasises that each artist has produced works which are 'respectively gorgeous, profound, refined and tender, wise, and subtle to an eminent degree'; that the Pre-Raphaelites as a whole have produced pictures 'which exhibited the utmost of devoted labour, the love of the subject carried to the extremest [sic] extent'; and that the Brotherhood, 'in a very few years, has almost revolutionised the style of Art in England'.⁴⁶

This final claim is bold, although Stephens is careful not to overstate the case; indeed, in order to justify it he takes time to lay out the theories underpinning modern Pre-Raphaelitism before describing the paintings themselves. In five densely worded columns he elaborates the arguments first made in his essays for the *Germ* six years earlier. Stephens starts by asserting the radical nature of Pre-Raphaelitism as the innovation of 'young men' – a new generation of artists refusing to bow to orthodoxy. Even more radically, the Pre-Raphaelite style was impacting 'the oldest members of the profession' who 'have given signs that they are more or less influenced by it'.⁴⁷ Artists who have, for most of their lives, 'chosen and deliberately followed out [...] one style of art', have been 'forced to modify, or entirely alter the whole scope of their efforts', and begin afresh – 'not in an easier routine, but in one incomparably more difficult; – retrace their steps and plunge into the most intense labour of finish'. Pre-Raphaelite painting is presented as a challenging and strenuous endeavour, rather than an idle pursuit; the older artist must now 'sit with the painful pencil in hand' and draw directly from nature, when previously he had 'laid in his skies with a large brush and a softener'. The same artist was also being forced to study anatomical accuracy with a new intensity: 'the curvatures of the bones, their articulations, and even the origin and insertion of certain muscles of which he had been

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

previously quite unsuspecting'. Madox Brown had expressed himself almost identically in the *Germ*, declaring that the artist must 'exert himself beyond his natural energies, seeking to enter into the character of each actor, studying them one after the other, limb for limb, hand for hand, finger for finger, noting each inflection of joint, or tension of sinew'.⁴⁸ Brown and Stephens stress the importance of detailed, unidealised observation instead of generalisation and idealisation; whereas conventional painting was 'soft', the Pre-Raphaelite practice was 'painful' and demanding.

That Pre-Raphaelitism was being adopted by an ever-widening circle of artists was also a cause for concern. Later in the same article, Stephens recounts having recently overheard a man remark to his companion about a specific painting: "'You see, my dear, there can't be much in this Pre-Raphaelism [sic], because so many do it, you know.'" ⁴⁹ Stephens avoids naming either the painting in question or the man who made the comment – although he was known to Stephens 'as a student of many years standing' – but he takes exception with both. The unnamed man had mistakenly associated the naturalistic, detailed principles of the PRB with a superficial type of painting which, in Stephens's view, 'partook of the Pre-Raphaelite character, only in the semblance of great finish'. The picture was highly detailed 'but not highly thought upon':

[E]very blade of grass was painted, but, alas! every blade of grass was of the same colour, – no reflections of self, or sky, or sun, or water; [...] no accident had befallen it, no rough winds had shaken it, the foot of no animal had crushed it, nor heavy rain broken it to the root; it was fortunate grass which must have lived under a glass case since spring: every blade was like a sword blade, undimmed, unwithered, untorn.⁵⁰

For Stephens, it was not enough to simply paint a patch of grass in a kind of generic, uniform detail: it had to reflect the particular atmospheric characteristics of its local surroundings. He might have been thinking of Hunt's *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia* from 1850–1 (Fig. 86) with its foreground of meticulous, individualised blades of grass, which Ruskin had noticed in his letter to the *Times* in 1851. Ruskin perceived 'the trodden grass and broken fungi' as material evidence of the physical struggle between Proteus and Sylvia moments before.⁵¹ Thus, Hunt's representation of the grass mirrors the painting's psychological narrative, and the conflict between the male and female characters. This characteristic sets it apart from the type of artificiality outlined above, which

⁴⁸ Ford Madox Brown, 'On the Mechanism of a Historical Picture, Part I. The Design', *Germ*, 71.

⁴⁹ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 321.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 321–22.

⁵¹ John Ruskin, 'To the Editor', *Times* (30 May 1851): 8.

presented detail for its own sake and did not bear evidence of having been painted outdoors and directly observed from nature, as the PRB advocated. In *The Elements of Drawing*, which was published the following year in 1857, Ruskin advised his readers, when drawing a clump of grass, to ‘try and draw it as it is, and don’t think how somebody “told you to *do* grass”’.⁵²

The academic pictorial conventions which the Brotherhood abjured were also examined and critiqued. To do so, Stephens parodied the lecturing tones of a Royal Academy tutor:

‘Let your chief light stand near the centre of your canvass [sic],’ was the dogma; [...] Let your principal figures stand near the centre of your picture, concentrate your interest upon that, make it prominent by every means in your power; [...] Let every figure be eight heads and a half high, every man is so of course; [...] You have little to do with variety of character in form, so stick to the laws of proportion of eight heads and a half, it is a mystic number.⁵³

This passage may well echo Ruskin’s *Pre-Raphaelitism* pamphlet from 1851, which derides the ‘marvellous stupidity’ of contemporary art lecturers and critiques their ‘principles of composition’: ‘A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object’.⁵⁴ Stephens continues to mock the established principles of composition – ‘arrange all your figures in balanced groups, inclining to the pyramid vertically and horizontally’ – and the preference for idealised beauty in history painting: ‘avoid what young ladies call “ugliness”’.⁵⁵ These rules, Stephens argues, result in ‘a tolerable historical picture [...] They are simple, [...] and avoid every unnecessary trouble of mind’.

However, Stephens continues, a high level of pictorial finish was only ‘the very smallest and least important of the changes contemplated by [the PRB]; far deeper went their intent’.⁵⁶ The ‘most grave’ of all these changes was that ‘every picture should have a motive in it, – that it should either convey a lesson to the observer, or record some noble act’.⁵⁷ Stephens mocks ‘meaningless pictures’ bearing generic titles such as ‘The Cottage Door’ and ‘The Pet Lambs’; such subjects should be ‘*painted down*, and overweighed by the stronger power of pictures which really meant something’. This line of argument is taken up again later in the article, for which Stephens adopts a polemical tone:

⁵² Ruskin, *Works*, 15:97: ‘The grass may be ragged and stiff, or tender and flowing; sunburnt and sheep-bitten, or rank and languid; fresh or dry; lustrous or dull’.

⁵³ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 322.

⁵⁴ Ruskin, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 101.

⁵⁵ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 322.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 322.

What regions of Poetry and Fact are there to illustrate beyond the ordinary beaten track! How many noble deeds have a moral, and require an expounder? – why go to the antique countries for heroic actions, when such lie at our door every day, lie within our houses and our hearts? Should not the artist *be* the Poet and *create* his own subject? why search the brains of other men? – if a subject is good in itself, and well told, there will be no difficulty in its being understood by the observer; – but, on the contrary, it will be seized upon with avidity as new, as a fresh suggestion, a fresh thought from nature, a fresh flower of imagination.⁵⁸

Consciously blurring the lines between artistic and literary creation was central to the Pre-Raphaelite project, the Brotherhood being composed of painters who actively wrote poetry and prose. Stephens's wording is subtle but clear: rather than speculating that an artist *might* be a poet, he declares that they *should* be, encouraging painters to think in literary terms. As the previous chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, Stephens himself had done this to a great extent, experimenting with poetry and staking his claim as an art writer at the same time as creating paintings and drawings which were inspired by literature: *Dethe and the Riotours*, *The Proposal*, *Morte d'Arthur* and a design from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* executed in 1851 (see Appendix 1, No. 10). He had also crafted his own subject, *Mother and Child*, which fulfilled his own tenet of portraying scenes drawn from 'within our houses and our hearts'.

Describing Pre-Raphaelite Paintings

Stephens first addresses Millais's oeuvre up until the mid-1850s, from *Isabella* (1848–9) and *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849–50), through *Ophelia* (1850–1) and *Mariana* (1850–1) to *The Order of Release* (1852–3) and *A Huguenot* (1851–2).⁵⁹ However, 'unquestionably the most impressive work', in his opinion, was the recently completed *Autumn Leaves* (Fig. 80), painted in 1855–6. In recent years the picture has been extensively analysed by numerous scholars who have teased out its underlying themes of transience and mortality, and highlighted its importance as an image 'full of beauty and without subject' which anticipated later developments in the Aesthetic Movement.⁶⁰ W. M. Rossetti had written a brief notice of Millais's painting in the *Crayon* in June 1856, commending its 'intense and splendid colour [...] and a certain passionate feeling and tone throughout', but simply

⁵⁸ Ibid., 322.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 322–24. JEM's *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849–50), *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* (1849–50), *The Proscribed Royalist* (1852–3), *Peace Concluded* (1856), *The Rescue* (1855), *The Blind Girl* (1854–6) and *L'Enfant du Régiment* (1854–5) are also described.

⁶⁰ For example, Malcolm Warner, 'John Everett Millais's *Autumn Leaves*: "a picture full of beauty and without subject"', in Parris, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, 126–42; Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake*, 12–35; Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais*, 132. Effie Millais's journal, stating that JEM 'wished to paint a picture full of beauty and without subject', is quoted in Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 141.

describing it as ‘a group of young girls burning a heap of autumn leaves’.⁶¹ Stephens’s response to *Autumn Leaves* is altogether more rapturous, resulting in one of his finest passages of descriptive prose:

By the margin of a valley-wood stand four fate-like children, who are burning fallen leaves with fire; they have gathered a fresh heap, from which the smoke creeps upward, while one continues to add more and more. The sun has sunk and dark night cometh, the whole valley is full of a luminous mist, out of which stark, denuded poplars rise at intervals, standing sharp against the sky, which has been golden, but now fadeth to a dun brassiness, while in the zenith is the black-purple of night: ‘For the night cometh in which no man can work’. The children’s faces are turned from the glowing west, and are in shadow; – there is a strange impassivity upon them, as if they knew not what they did.⁶²

The archaic tone of Stephens’s language – ‘cometh’, ‘fadeth’ – was determined by the biblical passages he saw manifested in Millais’s painting, and which he paraphrases and directly quotes within the text: ‘the night cometh, when no man can work’ (John 9:4); and, later in the paragraph, ‘For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke’ (Isiah 9:18).⁶³ Stephens’s impression that the girls ‘knew not what they did’ echoes Christ’s dying words during the crucifixion, as recorded in Luke 23:34: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’. Like Christ suspended on the cross between heaven and earth, between living and dying, the girls in *Autumn Leaves* are caught in a liminal state between childhood and adolescence. The phrase also recalls Tennyson’s ‘The Lady of Shalott’, in which the lady ‘knows not what the curse may be’ which has been cast upon her, ‘And so she weaveth steadily’. Similarly, Millais’s girls go through the trancelike motions of gathering the dead leaves and building up the fire but are unaware of the external forces governing their inexorable mortality.

Stephens enriches his description with adjectives such as ‘luminous’, ‘denuded’ and ‘glowing’, the elongated vowel sounds of which carry a languid quality which accords with the painting’s twilight mood. Fricative consonants and sibilant phrases – ‘four fate-like children’, ‘fallen leaves with fire’, ‘sun has sunk’, ‘standing sharp against the sky’ – reflect the stillness and quietude of *Autumn Leaves*, also recalling the sounds made by the dry, dead leaves falling onto the pyre. Stephens

⁶¹ William Michael Rossetti, ‘Art News from England. Letter XIV [20 April 1856]’, *Crayon* 3, no. 6 (June 1856): 182; quoted in Casteras, *English Pre-Raphaelitism*, 77.

⁶² Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 324.

⁶³ The same quotation is inscribed on the picture frame of Ford Madox Brown’s *Work* (1852–63; Manchester Art Gallery). FGS also quotes Isiah 9:19: ‘Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother’.

deployed similar techniques in his rendition of the water effects in Millais's *Ophelia*, in which Ophelia's 'dark golden hair spread like a luminous net upon the stream'.⁶⁴ Stephens also recognises the effectiveness of the uncomplicated composition of *Autumn Leaves*: 'out of fewer materials have we ever seen so much expressed'. W. M. Rossetti had remarked that the viewer of Millais's painting 'does not demand subject, but recognises the thing as a complete and noble artistic achievement of an order apart'.⁶⁵ Stephens expresses a similar sentiment in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms': the audience 'might take it either way; – as a beautiful study of a peculiar effect of nature, such as is rarely painted, [...] or might conceive it as we have attempted to describe' – in other words, as a religious metaphor for the transience of human life. In this way, *Autumn Leaves* contradicts itself – on the one hand apparently subjectless, on other hand it carries an underlying spiritual message which the artist hoped its viewers would recognise. As Malcolm Warner has already recounted, Millais wrote to Stephens after reading the *Crayon* article, thanking him 'because you entirely understand what I have intended [...] you certainly have read my thoughts'.⁶⁶ In this way, *Autumn Leaves* fulfils the creed which Stephens articulated in the second instalment of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms'.

In the same way that *Autumn Leaves* is typically viewed as a rehearsal of emerging Aestheticist ideals, Stephens's ekphrastic response to the painting, with its conscious adoption of poetic techniques, can be seen as anticipating the art writings of Swinburne and Pater from the late 1860s. The similarities between their writing styles were recognised on at least one occasion, when Stephens's articles on D. G. Rossetti's paintings were mistakenly attributed to Pater by Harry Quilter, the art critic for the *Spectator*.⁶⁷ For example, Pater's essay on Leonardo da Vinci for the *Fortnightly Review* in 1869 praised Leonardo's skill at portraying the 'solemn effects of moving water' in paintings such as *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* (1503):

[T]hat delicate place, where the wind passes like the hand of some fine etcher over the surface, [...] and the tops of the rocks, to which the waves never rise, are green with grass grown fine as hair. [...] Through [Leonardo's] strange veil of sight things reach him so; in no ordinary night or day, but as in faint light of eclipse, or in some brief interval of falling rain at daybreak, or through deep water.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 323.

⁶⁵ Rossetti, 'Art News from England', 182.

⁶⁶ JEM to FGS, undated (December 1856 or after), FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, ff. 31–32; Warner, 'Millais's *Autumn Leaves*', 127–26, which reprints JEM's comments in full.

⁶⁷ See Introduction, note 60.

⁶⁸ Walter Pater, 'Notes on Leonardo da Vinci', *Fortnightly Review* 6, no. 35 (November 1869), 500. Pater revised this article for *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873).

As Stephens did with *Autumn Leaves*, Pater luxuriates in the twilight atmosphere of Leonardo's painting. Both critics praise the subjective vision of each artist, regardless of the century and country in which they worked. For Stephens, Millais could not have created his 'beautiful study of a peculiar effect of nature' without harnessing his 'power of pure perception' – the quality which Stephens had advocated as essential for all artists and writers in the *Germ* in 1850.⁶⁹ In other words, Millais had observed this 'peculiar effect of nature' – a distant sunset darkening a valley in autumn – and successfully captured it in paint with a skill that was unique to him. Pater, meanwhile, attributes the hazy quality of Leonardo's technique to his 'strange veil of sight', through which 'things reach him [...] as in the faint light of eclipse'. Of course, in the case of *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* these sights were imagined rather than directly observed from nature. Therefore, although *Autumn Leaves* was intended on some level to communicate a moral, spiritual message, it inspired Stephens to indulge in a kind of writing which luxuriated in the purely aesthetic qualities of Millais's 'beautiful study of a peculiar effect in nature'.

If *Autumn Leaves* was leading Pre-Raphaelitism towards 'beauty, that is beauty alone', Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (Fig. 36), which Stephens describes in the next, fourth instalment of 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', fulfils his theory that 'the best application of painting may be made to moral and not to spiritual ends'.⁷⁰ As Susan Casteras has observed, Stephens would have been mindful of John Ruskin's letter to the *Times* praising the painting in 1854, when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy.⁷¹ Ruskin highlighted the picture's symbolic elements, famously the 'terrible lustre' and 'fatal newness' of the modern furniture in the room. He also applauded the way in which Hunt's uniform precision of detail forces the spectator to confront the reality of the woman's situation – the 'trivial objects [...] thrust themselves forward with a ghastly and unendurable distinctness'. Having more column space than Ruskin, Stephens describes *The Awakening Conscience* in more detail to aid his American readers who were yet to experience the painting for themselves. He captures its unusual light effects, heightened by the disorientating arrangement of the window and layered mirror reflections.

⁶⁹ Stephens, 'Modern Giants', 172.

⁷⁰ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), .

⁷¹ Casteras, *English Pre-Raphaelitism*, 107; John Ruskin, 'Letter to the Editor', *Times* (25 May 1854), 7.

Both Ruskin and Stephens highlight the woman's face as the most expressive element in

Hunt's painting. Ruskin described it as follows:

[T]he countenance of the lost girl, rent from its beauty into sudden horror; the lips half open, indistinct in their purple quivering, the teeth set hard, the eyes filled with the fearful light of futurity, and with tears of ancient days.

Compare this with Stephens's impression in 1856:

[T]he lips drawn against the teeth, the retracted and expanded nostril, with the hard-set cheek, show the force of the sudden blow which has awakened her memory, – her wide eyes, straining on vacancy, seem as if they saw Hell open before her.⁷²

Any differences between these descriptions are governed by the fact that Hunt repainted the woman's face in 1856 and 1857 at the request of Thomas Fairbairn, the painting's first owner, who found it 'too painful'.⁷³ In its original form, as Ruskin and other reviewers saw it in 1854, tears flowed down her cheeks.⁷⁴ This did mean that Stephens had ample opportunity to examine the work afresh while it was in Hunt's studio. Earlier in the article, Stephens declared that 'to describe the expression of features in these pictures [by Hunt] [...] is beyond the power of words'.⁷⁵ For *The Awakening Conscience* he felt moved to attempt it, and his excessive use of dynamic verbs conveys his struggle to adequately capture in words the conflicting emotions playing across the woman's face – her 'lips drawn', nostrils 'retracted and expanded', cheek 'hard-set' as if from a 'sudden blow', 'wide eyes, straining'. Stephens takes his description further, homing in on her 'hands, clutched together, show how keenly she feels the evil which has befallen her; the trinkets upon them drive into her flesh, and the fingers are intertwined with spasmodic force'. These visceral details act as a textual equivalent to the immediacy and precision of Pre-Raphaelite painting; the woman's agonised body language is an expression of her internal, spiritual agony. Sympathy for her plight is elicited by juxtaposing her horrified appearance with that of her male keeper, 'handsome, as the tiger is, false, hard, and cruel'. It is worth noting that Ruskin cannot quite bring himself to fully confront the woman's plight, modestly remarking that '[t]he poor girl has been singing with her seducer'. By contrast, Stephens frankly addresses Hunt's prostitution theme, introducing the American reader to 'the interior of one of those

⁷² Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 354.

⁷³ Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:166–68.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 166–68. See also the *Examiner* (13 May 1854), 293, which describes how 'her tears begin to flow' upon hearing 'Oft in the stilly night' played on the piano.

⁷⁵ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1856), 354.

maisons damnées, which the wealth of the seducer has furnished for the luxury of a woman who has sold herself and her soul to him’.

Towards the end of his 1854 *Times* letter, Ruskin quotes from an eighteenth-century poem by William Shenstone (1714–63), ‘Elegy XXVI’: ‘Hope not to find delight in us, they say, / For we are spotless, Josy – we are pure’.⁷⁶ Stephens instead pairs Hunt’s painting with a more startling piece of contemporary poetry, as had become his custom: Tennyson’s ‘The Palace of Art’.⁷⁷ ‘The colour of [*The Awakening Conscience*] has a subdued and gloomy richness about it, which befits the subject’, Stephens writes. The viewer could imagine that the woman, looking into the ‘deep shadows there are about the room’, beholds, quoting from Tennyson’s poem, ‘white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood’, ‘horrible night-mares’ and ‘hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame’.⁷⁸ These invisible gothic terrors contrast with Stephens’s preceding examination of the room’s material objects, creating a frightening disjuncture between the picture’s visible realism and the implication of supernatural forces which only the woman can behold.

The two instalments of ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ published in September and October 1857 are devoted to D. G. Rossetti.⁷⁹ Stephens had sent this portion of the series to John Durand back in January, proudly declaring: ‘It is the first entire description of Rossetti’s works which has been written even in England, I have had unusual opportunities of matter for its compilation and found it so interesting [...] that it has grown much longer than I contemplated’.⁸⁰ Unlike the paintings of Millais and Hunt, Rossetti’s drawings and watercolours had been rarely seen in public, except for a selection at the Pre-Raphaelite group exhibition in Russell Place earlier in 1857, and certainly never in America.⁸¹ As Rossetti, sensitive to negative criticism, avoided exhibitions after 1850, Stephens’s articles offered an attractive alternative, a form of literary, ekphrastic exhibition – and a highly appreciative one at that. However, the author was daunted by the task of describing these works,

⁷⁶ Quoted in Ruskin, ‘Letter to the Editor’, 7.

⁷⁷ Published 1832, revised 1842; Alfred Tennyson, ‘The Palace of Art’, in *Tennyson: A Selected Edition*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Routledge, rev. ed. 2007), 50–70.

⁷⁸ FGS quotes Tennyson’s ‘The Palace of Art’, ll. 236–44.

⁷⁹ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1856), 355, had briefly noticed DGR’s *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* (1848–9) and *Ecce Ancilla Domini!* (1849–50).

⁸⁰ FGS to Durand, 20 January 1857, JDP.

⁸¹ For more on the watercolours, see Robert Wilkes, ‘The 1860s Watercolours of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’, *British Art Journal* 8, no. 3 (Winter 2017/2018), 48–55.

‘which’, he wrote, ‘from the nature of their subjects, and the manner of their execution, were peculiarly difficult to treat upon’. He also prefaced this lengthy dissertation with an apology ‘begging the reader’s indulgence whenever verbal disquisition may fail’.⁸² Two characteristics of Rossetti’s oeuvre dominate the discussion: his preoccupation with literary subjects and his evocative use of colour.

Since there are as many as twelve artworks described in detail, Stephens’s appraisal of *Arthur’s Tomb* (Fig. 87) is a useful focal point, not least because it continues the Arthurian theme which had motivated his own painting and poem about King Arthur in 1849. Rossetti’s watercolour, painted in 1855 as a commission for Ruskin, depicts a subject which Stephens himself had first related to the artist: the final meeting of Queen Guenevere and Sir Launcelot, the adulterous lovers, over the tomb of King Arthur at Glastonbury.⁸³ As Stephens indicated to Durand, the image had not been written about before on account of its obscurity. Yet his appraisal is also notable for including an extract from William Morris’s poem ‘King Arthur’s Tomb’ to further illustrate the watercolour’s dramatic subject. Stephens generally used quotations from contemporary rather than historical poetry in order to enhance his discussions of art topics. For *Arthur’s Tomb*, he disregarded the fifteenth-century text which had inspired Rossetti, Malory’s *Le Morte d’Arthur*, in favour of a new poem by a younger, then-unknown writer. The ‘glorious poem by William Morris’, as Stephens called it, would not be properly published until 1858, in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*; Stephens therefore appears to have accessed an earlier draft of it, as the excerpt printed in the *Crayon* differs significantly in parts from the final published version.⁸⁴ He applauded the ‘exquisite simplicity’ and ‘the vein of human feeling’ in Morris’s ‘King Arthur’s Tomb’, thereby reinforcing the kinship between the visual and literary arts central to Pre-Raphaelitism – for, by association, Rossetti’s watercolour possesses similar qualities. Morris had been directly influenced by Rossetti, as Stephens pointed out in his monograph on Rossetti decades later.⁸⁵

⁸² Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1857), 261.

⁸³ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 40, note 1.

⁸⁴ Stephens, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ (1857), 300, prints the lines ‘This thing we did, while yet he was alive, why not, / O long lithe twisting knight, now he is dead?’. Compare with the lines published in the first edition of William Morris, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1858), 32: ‘This thing we did while yet he was alive, / Why not, O twisting knight, now he is dead?’.

⁸⁵ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 40, note 1: ‘Mr. W. Morris’s fiery-hearted poem, *King Arthur’s Tomb*, [...] illustrates the subject Rossetti chose for his drawing, and owed existence to it’.

Stephens's praise for Morris's poem demonstrates his open-mindedness to an upcoming generation of Pre-Raphaelite followers. As May Morris later noted, *The Defence of Guenevere* 'was received with indifference by the critics' when it appeared in 1858.⁸⁶ Stephens was thus among the first critics to write appreciatively of Morris's poetry. Over a decade later, Pater declared in his review of *The Defence of Guenevere* that Morris 'had diffused through "King Arthur's Tomb" the maddening white glare of the sun, and tyranny of the moon [...] The colouring is intricate and delirious, as of "scarlet lilies"'.⁸⁷ Stephens's extensive analysis of *Arthur's Tomb* (Fig. 87) also dwells upon the picture's striking colour palette:

We have said that the effect is sunlight, and we wish to describe how beautifully this is suggested [...] The mail of Lancelot contains hundreds of little lights and shadows of rich colours, and pure green reflections from the trees; it fairly sparkles in the picture. [...] There is a most fascinating quality of colour about the whole picture; the great blue shadows which fill the boughs of the apple trees, and the flickering sunlight about the heads of Ginevra and the knight, and the king's tomb, are most absolutely beautiful; it is a picture one would never tire of looking at.⁸⁸

As in Pater's appraisal of Morris's poem, Stephens registers the dazzling effects of light and colour as integral to the scene, in addition to the suggestive poses of the figures themselves (Lancelot bending across the tomb and Guenevere, in Stephens's words, 'with one hand repulsing the knight' as a 'declaration of repentance'). Verbs including 'sparkles' and 'flickering' convey a sense of movement, as if a breeze is blowing through the picture. Stephens's reaction to the picture is deeply personal, in that he acknowledges his presence within the visual analysis as an observer, even remarking that the original watercolour 'is now lying before us as we write'. He is therefore confirmed as the mediator between the artwork and the reader, although this was not always an easy task, particularly when it came to the complexities of Rossetti's watercolours. Earlier in the same article he even admitted that 'it is impossible to describe colour in words' when the reader cannot see the original picture.⁸⁹ He is being rather too self-deprecating here, and also contradicting himself, for the descriptions throughout 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' focus on colour as a fundamental component of Rossetti's work.

The shifts in Stephens's prose style reflect the changes within the Pre-Raphaelite movement in the latter half of the 1850s, as described at the beginning of this chapter. After the lyrical

⁸⁶ *Collected Works of William Morris*, xxj.

⁸⁷ Pater, 'Poems by William Morris', 82.

⁸⁸ Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1857), 300.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 299.

descriptions of Rossetti's watercolours, the seventh instalment in November 1857 introduces 'several other artists who have [...] been companions or followers of the original [PRB] in their efforts to create a school, based upon life and Nature'.⁹⁰ One of these artists was Charles Allston Collins, whose *Convent Thoughts* (Fig. 88) Stephens singled out for attention. As we saw in Chapter 4, he had briefly reviewed this painting in the *Critic* in 1851.⁹¹ For 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' he enlarged his argument. After noting that *Convent Thoughts* had earned Collins 'his share of abuse and ridicule' several years earlier, Stephens outlines the scene as a whole – 'a nun in a convent garden, contemplating a passion flower' – and proceeds to analyse its formal qualities:

It was a work of enormous labour and most delicate finish; nothing could possibly be carried to a greater extent in quality of minuteness than the clear tones and exquisitely transparent character of the water, or be more various and elaborate than the flower beds and parasites upon the wall; you might look into the deepest intricacies of the shrubs, and see reflection[s] upon leaves and transparent leaves themselves right down in the very centre of every plant; the exquisite drawing which abounded in these details was most marvellous, and put to shame all missal illumination that has ever been seen.⁹²

Unlike his impressionistic, poetically charged description of Millais's *Autumn Leaves* discussed earlier in this chapter, Stephens's analysis of *Convent Thoughts* struggles to encapsulate the dizzying array of natural detail presented to him. Where *Autumn Leaves* exhibited suggestive colouring and lighting ('luminous mist', 'dun brassiness', 'the black-purple of night'), Collins's painting is defined by its absolute specificity. There is no room for ambiguity; in the same review Stephens declares that Collins had achieved a 'clear, cold, and pure' effect across the entire canvas. Furthermore, the close examination of the painted surface is aligned with the experience of looking at an actual plant in great detail; the printed text (without accompanying illustrations) can almost convince us that Stephens is referring to shrubs and leaves that were really present before him, rather than a two-dimensional representation of them. To some extent he was, for Collins had painted the flowers directly from nature in the garden of Thomas Combe in Oxford in 1850.⁹³ It is testament to the Pre-Raphaelites' adherence to truth that the original plants were translated firstly into the painted image, and then again into Stephens's prose, with an accuracy unique to each medium. This establishes a programme of mimesis across both the visual and literary branches of Pre-Raphaelitism.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 325.

⁹¹ 'Laura Savage' [Frederic George Stephens], 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Critic* (14 June 1851), 290.

⁹² Stephens, 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' (1857), 326–37.

⁹³ Parris, *Pre-Raphaelites*, 87.

Stephens was looking back at a painting done in 1850–1, and *Autumn Leaves* dates from around five years later, closer to the time that he was writing. The differences in his descriptive methods suggest the variance of early Pre-Raphaelite painting from the productions of artists such as Millais who were beginning to experiment with new themes and techniques in the mid-1850s. ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ can therefore be situated in the midst of a sea-change in the movement. Stephens is by no means consistent in his opinions, but there are indications in ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ that he was beginning to lean towards Aestheticism or was at least willing to accept it as an emerging style. Early in the series he declared that ‘the best application of painting may be made to moral and not to spiritual ends’, and paintings such as Hunt’s *Awakening Conscience* fulfilled this criterion. Collins’s *Convent Thoughts* also reassured him that the precision and detail of early Pre-Raphaelite painting may be continued by the associates of the PRB. So extensive and wide-reaching is Stephens’s series that this chapter has only been able to cover a selection of its themes and descriptions, beginning with his discussion of early Italian art which enlarged his arguments in the *Germ* and ending with the future directions of modern Pre-Raphaelitism. The sheer scope of ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ distinguishes it as Stephens’s major literary achievement in the 1850s, and he seems to have known this, as he contemplated republishing the series as a book.⁹⁴ The emergence of a new artistic style in the mid-1850s sets the tone for the next chapter, in which colour and music play a key role.

⁹⁴ ‘I shall be glad to be informed, [...] if you would object to a republication on this side [i.e. in England], of the entire series of my papers on 2 P-Rs, I having an idea that such might find a publisher if enlarged and remodelled’; FGS to Durand, 19 October 1857, JDP.

Chapter 8: Colour, Music and ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ in Stephens’s Art Criticism in the 1860s

Chapters 6 and 7 demonstrated Stephens’s commitment to communicating the aims and ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites to a broad, transatlantic audience in his art criticism in the mid-1850s. In this chapter, I will briefly consider other aspects of his art criticism in the following decade which have been neglected by scholars of both Pre-Raphaelitism and the later Aesthetic Movement: the associations between colour and music (or sound) within a work of art, and the idea of ‘Art for art’s sake’. Music had already featured in Stephens’s writings in the 1850s: for example, his short story ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’, discussed in Chapter 6, had a central theme of music-making, while in his essay ‘On Finish in Art’ published in 1858 (also examined in Chapter 6) he declared that Millais’s *Return of the Dove to the Ark* was ‘executed with the same ease as a skilful musician brings forth music from an accustomed instrument’.¹ In the 1860s, Stephens began to use music as a theoretical framework through which to examine the formal elements of a work of art, in particular the element of colour. Since the late 1850s, too, he had experimented with a highly descriptive prose style which luxuriated in mood and atmosphere rather than attempting to convey a moral message.² This chapter will address various articles by Stephens in the *Athenaeum* and *Macmillan’s* in the 1860s which explore proto-Aesthetic ideas.

Literary scholars and art historians have tended to regard Swinburne and Pater as the forebears of Aesthetic literature.³ It is my intention here to introduce Stephens as another important contributor. His participation in the emerging field of Aesthetic ideas in the 1860s has been largely overlooked, although there are some recent exceptions which are worth mentioning. Julie F. Codell

¹ Stephens, ‘On Finish in Art’, 199.

² Two publications by FGS from 1859 exemplify these experiments: his essay ‘Cheap Art’ for *Macmillan’s Magazine*, particularly his description of one of Alfred Rethel’s 1848 *Dance of Death* engravings; and a poetically charged and unclassifiable essay ‘A Night on the Water’ for the obscure periodical *Titan* (July 1859): 659–66. Unfortunately, there has not been room to discuss these in this thesis.

³ Thaïs Morgan, ‘Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism: Swinburne and Pater’, *Victorian Studies* 36, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 315. Morgan cites Linda Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 176, which regards Swinburne and Pater as ‘the two great Aesthetic writers’. See also Susan Owens, ‘Literature and the Aesthetic Movement’, in *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860–1900*, eds. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 57–59, which also names Swinburne and Pater as the primary figures in the development of Aestheticist prose.

has recognised that Stephens anticipated Swinburne by ‘invok[ing] synaesthetic comments and descriptions of rich colours’ in his review of D. G. Rossetti’s paintings in the *Athenaeum* in July 1865.⁴ Indeed, Codell’s assertion that Swinburne used ‘evocative, sensual, emotional, and synaesthetic language’ to describe paintings in the late 1860s could equally be applied to Stephens, who was publishing art criticism earlier in the decade. In his extensive analysis of the 1865 Rossetti article, D. M. R. Bentley highlights the sensual qualities of Stephens’s descriptions of Rossetti’s newest paintings, also locating the text within ‘the emergent Art-for-Art’s-sake tradition’.⁵ Bentley also suggests that the musical analogies which Stephens uses to describe the colour scheme of *The Blue Bower* (Fig. 89) were probably prompted by recent controversies surrounding Whistler’s recently exhibited ‘symphony in white’ paintings, which sought to imbue painted colours with aural qualities.⁶ Elsewhere, Prettejohn has recognised that Stephens’s article on Rossetti examined ideas about music which would recur in Pater’s essay ‘The School of Giorgione’, which famously declared that ‘All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music’ – a central theory of the Aesthetic Movement in the following decades.⁷ Despite these speculations about Stephens’s innovations as an art critic in the first half of the 1860s, scholars are yet to fully recognise his potential as a primary commentator on Aestheticist principles during this innovative decade. The above examples focus on one article by Stephens; some of the publications I will consider here have not been examined before.

The increasing flexibility of Stephens’s critical opinions at this time is evident in the description he wrote for the *Athenaeum* of a painting by Millais, *The Eve of St Agnes* (Fig. 90), when it appeared at the RA in 1863. Millais was inspired by Keats’s poem ‘The Eve of St Agnes’ (1820), an early favourite of the PRB.⁸ The poem is set in the fourteenth century, yet the artist chose to

⁴ Julie F. Codell, ‘The Art Press and Its Parodies: Unravelling Networks in Swinburne’s 1868 *Academy Notes*’, *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 181; [Frederic George Stephens], ‘Mr Rossetti’s Pictures’, *Athenaeum* no. 1982 (21 October 1865), 545–46.

⁵ D. M. R. Bentley, ‘Making an Unfrequented Path of Art His Own: Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s Paintings in the Aesthetic Mode’, *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 17 (Spring 2008): 21–35. The paintings by DGR which FGS describes are *The Blue Bower* (1865; Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham), *Venus Verticordia* (1865; Russell-Cotes Museum, Bournemouth) and *The Beloved* (1865; Tate, London).

⁶ Bentley, ‘Making an Unfrequented Path’, 25.

⁷ Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake*, 209; Walter Pater, ‘The School of Giorgione’, *Fortnightly Review* 22, no. 130 (October 1877): 528. The essay was republished in the third edition of Pater’s *Studies of the History of the Renaissance* (1888).

⁸ WHH painted *The Eve of St Agnes* (*The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro*) (Guildhall Art Gallery, London) in 1848, while JEM made his first study of Madeline in her bedroom in 1850 (The Maas Gallery, London). Arthur Hughes, the PRB associate, painted a triptych illustrating the poem in 1856.

represent furniture and garments from the Jacobean period (painted in the King's Room at Knole in Kent) for the scene of Madeline's undressing – an anachronism which Stephens labelled an 'absurdity'.⁹ For this reason, Paul Barlow has unfairly described Stephens's review as an 'attack' on Millais's painting, symptomatic of a 'literal-minded Pre-Raphaelite obsession with historical accuracy'.¹⁰ Yet Barlow was taking Stephens's phrase out of context, and Stephens's sympathy with Millais's intentions become clear when the review is read in full. 'The anachronism is so thorough', Stephens writes, 'that one soon gets rid of it to see how intense was the feeling that gave [the figure of Madeline] such an expression of hesitating fear and eager amorous expectation'.¹¹ Thus, historical accuracy gives way to psychological suggestiveness. Stephens then proceeds to recapture the mood of the painting:

Before the tall curtains of the ancient couch, pillars of drapery that, beyond our sight, reach the roof, stands this woman, her hair loosened, her face flushed warm with occidental glow, her nervous fingers lingering at her waist-knots, a robe of blue and silver fallen about her feet, her figure bathed in pale light and stained with spaces of gules, azure and amethyst. The jewelled casket on the table at the window glitters in all its mouldings and inlays, and that high window marks its shape and dimmed blazonries upon the floor.¹²

This passage luxuriates in poetic techniques. The alliterative pairings – reach/roof, face/flushed, stained/spaces, azure/amethyst – echo the rhythmical arrangement of colours in Millais's painting. The soft, fricative s and f sounds evoke both the sensuality of Madeline's undressing and the quiet hush of her chamber. The half-rhyme of 'fingers lingering' has the quality of an incantation, in keeping with the rapturous reverie into which Madeline has sunk. The same kind of sensual, alliterative language recurs in Swinburne's description of D. G. Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* written five years later.¹³ Stephens also uses extravagant or arcane colour terms – 'gules' rather than red, 'azure' rather than blue, 'amethyst' rather than purple – seemingly for their own sake.¹⁴ 'Gules', for example,

⁹ [Frederic George Stephens], 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* no. 1853 (2 May 1863): 589.

¹⁰ Paul Barlow, *Time Present and Time Past: The Art of John Everett Millais* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 102–3: '[The painting] was lamely attacked by F. G. Stephens as an "absurdity" because "the anachronism is so thorough"'.
¹¹ Stephens, 'Royal Academy', 589.

¹¹ Stephens, 'Royal Academy', 589.

¹² *Ibid.*, 589.

¹³ 'Her beautiful head lies back, sad and sweet, with fast-shut eyes in a death-like trance that is not death; over it the shadow of death seems to impend, making sombre the splendour of her ample hair and tender faultless features'; William Michael Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1868), 48. See Owens, 'Literature and the Aesthetic Movement', 57.

¹⁴ Compare these poetic colour terms with a passage from Stephens's 'A Night on the Water', 665, describing a sky full of 'low-lying stars gathered paler and paler minutely': 'Their broad and purple setting grew azure and paler blue, failed through all grades of curlean tint, until the grey sweetness of pure silver was attained. Amethystine red of faint wine-hue followed held place awhile. [...] Silver-grey and amethystine wine-red yielded to green, and I saw the stars, a golden hue they had, hiding themselves within a mist of light'.

is typically associated with heraldry rather than the fine arts and seems deliberately obscure, as if Stephens was attempting to cohere with Millais's enigmatic composition using occult terms. He has also appropriated phrases from Keats's original description of the scene, so that the 'casement high' (Keats's words) becomes 'that high window'; 'dim emblazonings' becomes 'dimmed blazonries'; and Madeline's 'silver cross soft amethyst' is repeated in the 'silver' robe and 'amethyst' light from the window. *The Eve of St Agnes*, a painting inspired by a poem, thus elicited a lyrical prose response from Stephens, and his ekphrastic paragraph attempts to match the picture's poetic qualities.

It matters little, then, if Millais did not strictly adhere to the source material, as Stephens concludes:

Unable to get a fourteenth-century room with every accessory *in situ*, [...] Mr Millais has taken an old room and given us the sentiment of the subject as it might be while the charm had the force of faith. He has done this so well that all questioning is beside the matter, and we must take it or leave it. We cannot fail to see that the idea is as much the artist's own as that of Keats [...] Mr Millais goes to Knowle [sic] House and paints an ancient bed-room *as he saw it*, gaining thereby something Keats himself had not when he wrote the passage describing the window, which for gorgeous verbiage has hardly an equal in the language.¹⁵

Far from attacking *The Eve of St Agnes* for its anachronisms, Stephens was celebrating Millais's evocative rendering of the Keats poem in spite of the deviations from the original text. Millais's decision to represent the 'sentiment of the subject as it *might be*', choosing suggestion over specificity, is central to the emerging Aestheticism of the 1860s. The phrase 'might be' indicates a substantial shift in priorities, with Pre-Raphaelite artists no longer so stringent about representing a historical subject as it would actually have looked. Indeed, it is jarring to see the Pre-Raphaelite ideal of a painter depicting a scene 'as he saw it' evoked in relation to a picture which noticeably shuns the established painting practices of the earlier PRB (minute, detailed brushwork and bright colours). W. M. Rossetti expressed similar support for Millais's 'preference' to paint his own subject in his review of the painting published the following month, after Stephens's review.¹⁶ Thus, the 'absurdity' mentioned earlier is ironic, rather than a deliberate insult from Stephens; anachronisms are absurd because they wilfully stray from the source material and leave the viewer with the difficult choice of

¹⁵ Stephens, 'Royal Academy', 589–90.

¹⁶ '[Millais] was under no obligation to cite Keats as an authority for his picture of a girl going to bed by moonlight [...] We would rather remember the picture in connexion with the lovely passage from Keats, link together in our mind Keats's Madeline and Millais's maiden, and gulp down the discrepancies for the sake of association'; William Michael Rossetti, 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Fraser's Magazine* 67, no. 402 (June 1863): 787. See also Julie F. Codell, 'Painting Keats: Pre-Raphaelite Artists Between Social Transgressions and Painterly Conventions', *Victorian Poetry* 33, nos. 3/4 (Autumn–Winter 1995): 359.

either tolerating or condemning them ('we must take it or leave it').

Much of Stephens's review of Millais's *St Agnes* is as pertinent to the development of Aestheticism as the painting itself.¹⁷ There is its lyrical prose style which dwells on exquisite visual appearances instead of an underlying narrative or moral lesson (Stephens does not mention, for example, that Madeline's lover, Porphyro, is watching her from the closet at this point in the story). The proposition that a painter can match a poet's 'gorgeous verbiage', thereby blurring the boundaries between one art form and another, was not new to Stephens's writing.¹⁸ In an article in the *Crayon* in 1858, he declared that an artist who has 'invented a new subject for himself [...] [becomes] in some sense a poet as well as a painter', while also recognising the difficulties faced by an artist illustrating a poem, noting 'the disadvantages of being [...] trammelled by the boundary of the text, which is at once a protection and a fetter'.¹⁹ There are several direct points of contact between Keats's poem, Millais's painting and Stephens's description, suggesting a reciprocal relationship in which no medium of expression – poetry, painting, prose – is ranked higher than another. While this is a recognised feature of Pre-Raphaelitism, the same can also be said of Aestheticism. In his overview of the Aesthetic Movement published in 1882, Walter Hamilton observed that 'the correlation of the arts' was 'a main feature of the scheme'.²⁰

The earliest example of colour and music being directly connected in Stephens's writing is his review of the 1860 Academy exhibition in *Macmillan's Magazine*, which contains a lengthy examination of Millais's *The Black Brunswicker* (Fig. 91). After discussing the painting's 'technical merit[s]', in particular its carefully composed colour palette, Stephens suddenly declares:

Colour is as much an art as music, being in fact to the eye what music is to the ear, – the expression of beauty—

'That may overtake far thought,
With music that it makes.'

The time is rapidly coming when this will be understood, and critics no more omit to describe the colour of a

¹⁷ Numerous scholars have analysed the Aestheticist qualities of Millais's painting; see Jason Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais* (London: Phaidon Press, 2012), 130–31; Barlow, *Time Past and Time Present*, 104; Elizabeth Prettejohn, '1863: Millais's *The Eve of St Agnes*', in Hallet, Turner and Feather, *Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition*, <https://chronicle250.com/1863>.

¹⁸ Five years later, when Daniel Maclise's *Madeline After Prayer* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), depicting the same subject as JEM's *Eve of St Agnes*, was exhibited at the RA, FGS was prompted to reflect on the earlier painting: 'Millais, with a poetic zest that is given to few, revelled in the glory of the moonlight, painted it, and called the result after Keats's poem'; 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* no. 2114 (2 May 1868): 631.

¹⁹ Stephens, 'The Idea of a Picture', 64–65. See also Chapter 7, page 172.

²⁰ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), vii.

picture – heart of art as it is – than they would the melody of a piece of music.²¹

Stephens was writing seventeen years before Pater asserted that ‘All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music’. However, Pater used the term ‘art’ broadly to encompass all forms of visual media, and perhaps also the literary arts, particularly poetry. More specifically for Stephens, colours were suggestive both in their inherent visual qualities and in their strategic arrangement by an artist within a composition. Stephens quotes Tennyson’s 1842 poem ‘The Two Voices’ to enhance his message about colour as an ‘expression of beauty’: ‘That may overtake far thought, / With music that it makes’.²² Tennyson’s poem describes aural phenomena – invisible voices – which issue from the narrator’s imagination, suggesting that inner feelings can be externalised as sounds. The poem does not exactly fit Stephens’s theme, but he removed the quotation from its original context in order to underscore his artistic theory. The idea that colour can ‘make music’ which has the power to ‘overtake far thought’ could be seen to advocate a way of looking at art which glosses over a picture’s meaning, prioritising visual beauty which has been created for its own sake.

Stephens’s remarks are all the more unusual because they appear in close proximity to a work by Millais, *The Black Brunswicker*, which is rarely regarded as a defining image of the Aesthetic Movement and in fact signalled the artist’s return to more conventional, crowd-pleasing subjects after the lukewarm critical and commercial response to experimental paintings like *Autumn Leaves*. *The Black Brunswicker* is unambiguous, with a defined narrative and an emotional legibility; the relationship between the couple, and the man’s imminent departure for the Napoleonic wars, are clearly articulated through the figures’ dramatic poses and accessories such as the engraving of David’s *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* on the wall. The painting lacks the ambiguous, poetic atmosphere of *Autumn Leaves* or the later *Eve of St Agnes*, and the pin-sharp clarity of Millais’s technique indicates a return to the style of Pre-Raphaelite art from the early 1850s. Nevertheless, Stephens’s analysis of *The Black Brunswicker* supposes that the painting’s vibrant colours – ‘warm greens’, ‘hot transparent brown’, ‘cold blue’, ‘hot tint with crimson-scarlet’, ‘broken tints of warm or cold counterchanged upon the black [uniform] and the white dress’ – are able to remind the viewer,

²¹ [Frederic George Stephens], ‘The Royal Academy’, *Macmillan’s Magazine* (June 1860): 155–64.

²² Tennyson, ‘The Two Voices’, in Tennyson, *Poems*, 2:116–147. FGS misquotes the poem, which should read: ‘Like an Aeolian harp that wakes / No certain air, but overtakes / Far thought with music that it makes: / Such seem’d the whisper at my side’ (ll. 436–39).

simply by the visual facts of their appearance, of particular sensations of hotness or coolness, such as might normally be felt by touch. Of course, previous critics would have described a picture as having ‘warm’ or ‘cool’ tones in a general sense. Yet Stephens’s extensive pairing of temperatures with specific colours, and his acute awareness of complementary and ‘clashing’ colour combinations, is altogether more complex and anticipates a subjective approach to writing about colour based on the writer’s immediate, emotional response.

The idea of an artwork stimulating multiple senses at the same time did not exist in a vacuum. Stephens would certainly have read Coventry Patmore’s article about the Oxford Union murals published three years earlier in 1857, in which Patmore remarked that D. G. Rossetti’s mural ‘is “like a stream of rich, distilled perfumes”, and affects the eye much as one of Mendelssohn’s most unwordable “Lieder ohne Wörter” impresses the ear’.²³ Patmore specifically praised the ‘harmonious’ and ‘radiant’ colours of Rossetti’s mural, identifying a quality of ‘mysteriousness’ in their arrangement which accorded with the mystical subject matter (Sir Launcelot dreaming the figure of Guenevere and a group of angels). As Prettejohn has observed, Patmore’s conscious pairing of the eye and the ear anticipates an idea that would feature prominently in later Aestheticist art: ‘synaesthesia, the idea that an impression of one sense, in this case vision, may be so powerful as to evoke other senses, here smell and hearing’.²⁴ Stephens’s remarks in 1860 clearly echo Patmore, declaring that colour is ‘to the eye what music is to the ear’. Five years later, in 1865, Stephens once again implied a connection between these two organs in his aforementioned article on Rossetti’s paintings in the *Athenaeum*, with reference to *The Blue Bower*: ‘[the woman’s] air more powerfully entrances us to sympathy with her act of slowly drawing luxurious music from the strings, so that the eyes and the ear of fancy go together’.²⁵ Stephens preceded this statement with a sensuous description of the painting’s colour scheme, for which he used a range of terms usually associated with music or sound: ‘key-note’, ‘echoed’, ‘sharp notes’, ‘stridulous’, ‘harmonies’. Therefore, he went on to fulfil his own prophecy that critics would ‘no more omit to describe the colour of a picture [...] than they would the melody of a piece of music’ – indeed, a painting by Rossetti could assume musical

²³ Coventry Patmore, ‘Walls and Wall Painting at Oxford’, *Saturday Review* (26 December 1857): 584.

²⁴ Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake*, 28.

²⁵ Stephens, ‘Mr Rossetti’s Pictures’, 546.

qualities.

The relationship between colour and music evidently fascinated Stephens in 1865. The relationship between the two media is explicitly conveyed in his description of another painting by Millais, *Esther* (Fig. 92), when it appeared at the Royal Academy earlier that year:

The extraordinary power of [the blue curtain in the painting], accompanied as it is by the glorious yellow of the robe, and potent embroideries, and the ineffably soft and pure whiteness of the pillars, constitutes a picture *per se*, produced by the heart of the painter as a painter, without the remotest intention of enlightening anybody, adding to his historical knowledge, or moving other feelings than those which delight in colour for the sake of the art which can employ it as potently as, in music, a composer deals with sound when he is not expected to tell a story, mock the cries of animals, or produce sham thunder from a drum.²⁶

In this remarkable, if rather rambling sentence, Stephens's use of hyperbolic, emotional adjectives – 'extraordinary', 'glorious', 'potent', 'ineffable' – reveals his personal sensory reaction to Millais's painting. His word choice is irrational, for how exactly can a colour be ineffable?²⁷ Surely a colour is a visual fact which can be clearly expressed in words using an adjective? Reading closely, it is not the colour (in this case, white) which is ineffable, but its 'soft and pure' appearance; 'ineffable' is used here as an adverb. Stephens used the term again in his *Athenaeum* article about Rossetti's paintings published three months later, in relation to *The Blue Bower*: '[the painting's colours] are as ineffable in variety of tint as in their delicious harmony'.²⁸ In advance of Swinburne, Stephens proposed a more subjective approach to writing art criticism, using emotive language and emphasising individual senses. Walter Hamilton identified these tendencies among Aestheticist writers: 'Constantly yearning for the intense, their language is tinged with somewhat exaggerated metaphor, and their adjectives are usually superlative – as supreme, consummate, utter, quite too previously sublime, &c.'²⁹

Alison Smith has observed that the composition and emphasised colour harmonies of Millais's *Esther* were probably inspired by Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* exhibited in 1862 (Fig. 93), and that *Esther* 'shares many characteristics with the progressive

²⁶ [Frederic George Stephens], 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* no. 1957 (29 April 1865): 592.

²⁷ 'Ineffable' is defined in the *OED*: 'That cannot be expressed or described in language; too great for words; transcending expression; unspeakable, unutterable, inexpressible'. This became one of FGS's favourite phrases; in 1863 he wrote of Whistler's *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen* (1864; Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC): 'Behind [the female figure] is a golden screen, so ineffably beautiful in its colour, and making such delightful harmony with the purple robe, red scarf, &c., of the woman, that we are glad to forgive the painter the ugliness of her face, which is not vulgar'.

²⁸ Stephens, 'Mr Rossetti's Pictures', 546. See also the previous note. WMR used the phrase 'delicious harmony' in his review comparing Millais's *Esther* with Whistler's *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl* (1864; Tate); William Michael Rossetti, 'The Royal Academy Exhibition', *Fraser's Magazine* (June 1865): 747.

²⁹ Hamilton, *Aesthetic Movement*, 35–36.

Aestheticist art of the 1860s: the decorative colour, striking use of anachronisms, [and] understated mood'.³⁰ Whistler's *White Girl* had caused Stephens some confusion when it was exhibited under the temporary title *The Woman in White* in 1862; he misinterpreted the painting as an illustration of Wilkie Collins's recent novel of the same name.³¹ His comments in the *Athenaeum* displeased Whistler, who replied that he 'had no intention whatsoever' of illustrating Collins's book but simply wished to paint 'a girl dressed in white standing in front of a white curtain'.³² This conscious rejection of explicatory subject matter apparently conflicted with Stephens's Pre-Raphaelitism, his earlier criticism in the *Germ* and the *Crayon* in the 1850s having stressed the importance of a carefully chosen pictorial subject intended to edify or instruct the viewer.³³ However, as his appraisal of Millais's *Esther* in 1865, quoted above, demonstrates, he was becoming more open-minded about artists producing pictures which were intended as studies of 'symbolic colour masses' which emphasised 'mood and psychology over depicted action', to paraphrase Jason Rosenfeld.³⁴ Indeed, as with *The Eve of St Agnes* mentioned earlier, Stephens does not mention the underlying narrative of *Esther*, even though Millais was depicting a known biblical subject.³⁵ Like the *St Agnes*, *Esther* inspired Stephens to reconfigure his opinions and to place the aesthetic experience of the painting, its exquisite colouring, above its thematic content.

Aside from its meditations on pictorial colour, Stephens's review of *Esther* promotes the idea that an artwork can exist for its own sake, in isolation, shunning 'historical knowledge [...] without the remotest intention of enlightening anybody'. Stephens would probably have been aware of Swinburne's review of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, published in 1862.³⁶ Swinburne criticised 'the

³⁰ Rosenfeld and Smith, *Millais*, 154.

³¹ Andrew McLaren Young et al., *The Paintings of James McNeill Whistler*, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 1:17; [Frederic George Stephens], 'Fine-Art Gossip', *Athenaeum* no. 1809 (28 June 1862): 856: 'The face is well done, but it is not that of Mr Wilkie Collins's "Woman in White"'.
³² Whistler to William Hepworth Dixon, 1 July 1862, *Athenaeum* no. 1810 (5 July 1862), 23.

³³ For example, 'F. G. S.' [Frederic George Stephens], 'The Idea of a Picture', *Crayon* 5, no. 3 (March 1858): 63–68, which states that a picture should be 'a lesson or attempt at teaching' and concludes: 'in the choice of subject a preference should be given to those which are more immediately connected with our own times, not only as being of more direct interest to us, but as handing down to future generations, for his study, the actions and aspect of men as they are and as they appear to us'.
³⁴ Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais*, 130.

³⁵ The Book of Esther, Chapter 5, in which the Jewish queen Esther preparing to enter the chamber of her husband King Ahasuerus in order to save her people from genocide, at the risk of her own life.

³⁶ Duval, 'Stephens', 68–76, makes the convincing argument that FGS would have been aware of Baudelaire's critical writings, 'in part through his certain exposure to the French periodicals *La revue française* and *La Revue des Deux Mondes*', in which Baudelaire's writings were published.

mass of readers' for thinking that 'a poem is the better for containing a moral lesson or assisting in a tangible or material good work' and opined that there was a 'distinct and vivid background of morality' beleaguering contemporary poetry. He also expressed a preference for writers who 'believe in the beauty of material subjects', citing Poe (a favourite poet of the PRB) as an earlier example of someone who 'has written poems without any moral meaning at all'.³⁷ Swinburne's ideas return, albeit with a less polemical tone, in Stephens's review of *Esther*. Using the composer as a metaphor for the artist, and music as an analogy for colour, Stephens critiques the idea that a painter is duty-bound to 'tell a story' in their pictures. Just as a composer should be free to explore the full potential of their music without the need to 'mock the cries of animals, or produce sham thunder', an artist should be free to 'delight in' the purely visual elements of their work, particularly colour, without worrying about the audience's desire to be 'enlightened'. Like Swinburne taking aim at 'the mass of readers', Stephens does not appear to be criticising artists themselves, but rather those critics and viewers who expect artists to present them with an imitation of reality. While this may seem like an anti-Pre-Raphaelite argument, the seeds of it can be seen in Stephens's 1859 article 'On Finish in Art' in the *Crayon*, which was discussed in Chapter 5: 'as soon as a work of Art comes to the attempt to deceive the senses in an endeavour to create a fact, [...] it ceases to be a work of Art, and becomes a sham, a waxwork, and a lie'.³⁸

The phrase 'colour for the sake of the art' used by Stephens in his review of *Esther* rehearses a concept which, like synaesthesia, would emerge as a leading principle of the Aesthetic Movement. 'Art for art's sake', the phrase which first appeared in English in essays by Swinburne and Pater published in 1868, is frequently cited as the credo of Aestheticism in the 1870s, and it is possible to see a precursor to this in Stephens's review Whistler's paintings at the Academy in the *Athenaeum* in May 1867:

[T]here can be nothing but thanks due to a painter who endeavours by any means to show what he really aims at, and to get observers to understand that he produces *pictures for the sake of ineffable Art itself* [my emphasis], not as mere illustrations of 'subjects', or the previous conceptions of other minds.³⁹

³⁷ Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'Charles Baudelaire: Les Fleurs du Mal', *Spectator* (6 September 1862): 999.

³⁸ Stephens, 'On Finish in Art', 197.

³⁹ [Frederic George Stephens], 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* no. 2064 (18 May 1867): 667.

The statement ‘pictures for the sake of ineffable Art itself’ comes close to ‘Art for art’s sake’, as Prettejohn has already pointed out.⁴⁰ Stephens sided with Whistler, condemning the ‘stupidly blundering abuse from those who regard pictures as representations of something after their own minds’, and admiring the artist’s *Symphony in White, No. 3* (Fig. 94) as a ‘beautiful study in grades of white, pale rose tints, and grey’. Just as, two years earlier, Stephens had struggled to adequately describe the ‘ineffable’ colour palettes of Rossetti’s *The Blue Bower* and Millais’s *Esther*, here he admits that he ‘cannot define the hues of Mr Whistler’s “symphony”, and so must limit our notice here to thanks for their beauty, wealth, and melodious combining’.⁴¹ W. M. Rossetti, in an article in the *Chronicle* which was published only seven days after Stephens’s review, on 25 May 1867, also praised Whistler’s paintings, because they were ‘suggestive’ rather than ‘demonstrative’ and because Whistler was striving ‘not so much to reproduce facts, or present a story of any kind, as to execute a work of art in which the conception and sentiment of the art itself shall be paramount’.⁴² Both critics adopted similar language – Stephens ‘ineffable’, Rossetti ‘suggestive’ – in an effort to explain Whistler’s radical project: the artist’s ‘symphonies’ were dismantling the artistic strictures of colour and subject matter in a way that was difficult for a writer to put into words.

Generally speaking, Stephens’s and Rossetti’s critiques reflect the shift from the detailed Pre-Raphaelite realism of the 1850s towards a looser, more evocative style of painting which was beginning to dominate British art in the 1860s. Prettejohn notes that Pater ‘never wrote at length about a work of contemporary art or about a visual artist’, and his ‘direct references to contemporary painting are few and brief’ – the majority of his art criticism focuses on antique, medieval and Renaissance paintings and sculptures.⁴³ By contrast, Stephens reviewed contemporary art and artists for a living, and his criticism (published weekly in the *Athenaeum*) appeared during a volatile,

⁴⁰ Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake*, 168. The phrase ‘Art for art’s sake’ proper appeared in English for the first time in Algernon Charles Swinburne, *William Blake: A Critical Essay* (London: John Camden Hotton, 1868), 91, and [Walter Pater], ‘Poems by William Morris’, *Westminster Review* 34, no. 2 (October 1868): 312.

⁴¹ Stephens, ‘Royal Academy’, 667.

⁴² *Chronicle* (25 May 1867): 209–10, quoted in Roger Peattie, ‘Whistler and W. M. Rossetti: “Always on the Easiest and Pleasantest Terms”’, *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 4 (Spring 1995): 85.

⁴³ Elizabeth Prettejohn, ‘Walter Pater and Aesthetic Painting’, in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. Elizabeth Prettejohn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 37–38.

experimental period in British art in the early 1860s, but noticeably earlier than the writings of Swinburne and Pater published later in the decade and onwards.

Stephens continued to explore the colour–music association in his later writings. In his monograph on D. G. Rossetti published in 1894, he provided a lavish description of the 1856–7 watercolour *The Blue Closet* (Fig. 81), declaring in a much-quoted passage that the picture was ‘an exercise intended to symbolise the association of colour with music’:

Four damsels appear in the composition, two of whom sing. Their dresses are respectively subdued purple and black, and pure emerald green and white. [...] The other pair are instrumentalists, and play on a double-keyed clavichord [...] while the one pinches the strings of a lute at her side, and her companion pulls the string of a little bell [...] The chief colours of the foreground and its figures are those of the black-and-gold tapestry over the clavichord, the gold of the musical instruments, the white and crimson of the lute-players garments, the scarlet, green and white of those of her companion. As to the association of colour and music – of which this drawing is a subtle instance, [...] we may notice that the sharp accents of the scarlet and green seem to go with the sound of the bell; the softer crimson, purple and white accord with the throbbing notes of the lute and clavichord, while the dulcet, flute-like voices of the girls appear to agree with those azure tiles on the wall and floor.⁴⁴

In his survey of *The New Paintings of the 1860s*, Allen Staley dismissed this analysis as Stephens simply ‘parroting’ D. G. Rossetti’s views about the watercolour’s musical symbolism, rather than being his own interpretation.⁴⁵ Prettejohn has also suggested that Stephens was ‘carefully schooled’ by Rossetti when writing his 1865 analysis of the aural qualities of Rossetti’s *The Blue Bower*, discussed above.⁴⁶ As we have seen, however, Stephens’s theories about ‘the association of colour and music’ originated in his discussion of a painting by Millais, *The Black Brunswicker*, in 1860. Stephens’s wording suggests that Rossetti probably ‘intended’ *The Blue Closet* to ‘symbolise the association of colour and music’, but this does not mean that Rossetti originated the concept for Stephens to then ‘parrot’ over a decade after his death. Rather than subjugating Stephens to the role of passive listener and communicator, it is more likely that he and Rossetti were discussing mutual ideals which were gathering ground in the late 1850s. In this way, his description of *The Blue Closet* in 1895 can be seen as a continuation of the descriptive mode he had adopted in the 1860s, at the vanguard of new aesthetic theories.

Art criticism written in a poetic style was a recognised mode of Aestheticist writing, as Arthur Symons observed in 1896: ‘Here was criticism as a fine art, written in prose which the reader

⁴⁴ Stephens, *Rossetti*, 41–42.

⁴⁵ Allen Staley, *The New Painting of the 1860s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 65.

⁴⁶ Treuherz, Prettejohn and Becker, *Rossetti*, 79.

lingered over as over poetry'.⁴⁷ Symons was referring to Pater's work, but could not the same be said about Stephens's description of Millais's *Eve of St Agnes* in 1863 and Rossetti's paintings in 1865? Can we even discern 'prose which the reader lingered over as over poetry' even earlier than these, in the lyrical ruminations on Millais's *Autumn Leaves* and Rossetti's watercolours in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' in 1856–7 discussed in Chapter 7? Stephens's membership to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and his workmanlike promotion of their art (not just in the 1850s, but throughout his career), has prevented his writing from being considered as anything other than Pre-Raphaelite; in other words, his art criticism has long been viewed through the lens of Pre-Raphaelitism, not Aestheticism, even though he would have been as equally exposed to contemporary artistic experiments as Swinburne or Pater. Admittedly, the earlier chapters of this thesis have reinforced this notion, highlighting the ways in which Stephens recorded the developments of Pre-Raphaelite art in publications such as the *Germ*, the *Critic* and the *Crayon* in the 1850s ('The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', for example, described numerous works of art by the PRB in print for the first time). We must also take into account the fact that his personal life was not of the same bohemian standards as D. G. Rossetti's coterie of Chelsea, although he did amass a large quantity of eclectic pottery and furniture in his house in Hammersmith Terrace and he often visited Rossetti's studio.⁴⁸ Yet the Aestheticist leanings of Stephens's writings in the 1860s, and the increasing flexibility of his critical opinions, place him in a new context as a participating member of the Victorian avant-garde.

⁴⁷ Arthur Symons, *Studies in Prose and Verse* (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1904), 65.

⁴⁸ Jason Rosenfeld has identified this characteristic in Millais: 'If Millais has been less credited than his peers for the rise of Aestheticism in England, it is because he chose not to live like an Aesthete, in the bohemian quarters of Chelsea, surrounded by Asian pottery and peacock feathers'; Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais*, 132.

Conclusion

This thesis has highlighted the 1850s as a defining decade for Stephens, and his art and writings from this period have warranted extensive examination. As an artist, he practiced what he had preached in his articles in the *Germ*, producing works of art that were drawn either from literary subjects or his own imagination, and which were fashioned in accordance with the artistic principles of the PRB. Although one must take care not to overlook the technical deficiencies in some of the works (the doll-like face of Griselda in *The Proposal* or the awkwardly modelled arm of the child in *Mother and Child*), there is still much to commend Stephens's skills as a painter of the highly detailed, naturalistic class of early Pre-Raphaelite art. I have shown how the themes and motives underpinning Stephens's work were shared by his fellow PRBs, through surprising new juxtapositions: Stephens's *Morte d'Arthur* with Hunt's *Rienzi*; *The Proposal* with Millais's *The Woodman's Daughter*; *Mother and Child* with Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*. These pairs of pictures were created either simultaneously with one another, or with one following the other, and my comparisons have helped to situate Stephens's works within a broader Pre-Raphaelite context.

Examining Stephens's writings between 1850 and 1870 has demonstrated the development of his critical opinions, a development which parallels the concomitant changes in Pre-Raphaelite art. This has hopefully answered the question of whether his art criticism underwent any alterations over time, from one decade to the next. His early articles in the *Germ* laid the foundation for his writing in the 1850s; indeed, many of his writings enlarged upon the ideas first laid out in the PRB magazine. This was certainly the case with his publications in the *Crayon* from 1856–9, including 'On Finish in Art' and the short story on Jan van Eyck. In this period, Stephens was committed to the idea that art should perform a moral function, and that post-Raphaelite art signified creative indolence, indulgence and sensuality, and he preached ideas of artistic chastity and purity. Yet just because art was chaste, did not mean it should retreat into the cloisters. On the contrary, Stephens demanded that artists should actively engage with the problems of modern life in their work, choosing subjects drawn from the very streets around them. Stephens's essays in the *Germ* and the *Crayon* consciously blur the boundaries between one art form and another, for he frequently quoted poetry in order to illustrate an

artistic point. Similarly, he also believed that a painter could take on the role of a poet by inventing their own pictorial subjects and closely examining the conditions of modern life, rather than simply repeating the thoughts of a previous writer. As I explained in Chapter 8, the lack of clearly defined distinctions between different branches of creativity carried over into the 1860s, when Stephens began to explore the associations between art and music, recognising this as a growing interest among British artists. In the same way that he had used poetry to ‘elucidate the meaning’ of painting, he began to implement a musical vocabulary when describing the aesthetic qualities of a two-dimensional work of art, particularly arrangements of colour.

On the other hand, we cannot quite assert that Stephens’s writing was proto-Aesthetic in every sense – the reality is more complicated. The tensions between Pre-Raphaelitism and an emerging Aestheticism were already evident in 1856, when Stephens described Millais’s *Autumn Leaves* in ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’ as being ‘a beautiful study of a peculiar effect of nature’ on the one hand, and a grave metaphor rooted in scriptural teachings on the other.⁴⁹ Clearly, though, Stephens was aware of avant-garde aesthetic theories and was willing to test them in his writings. As I suggested in Chapter 8, his critical opinions were more flexible in the 1860s. He became more open-minded about the lyrical, Aestheticist experimentations of his Pre-Raphaelite Brothers Millais and Rossetti and wrote sympathetically about the radical symphonic paintings of Whistler. As William Michael Rossetti argued in the preface to his book *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary* (1867):

The person who begins the work of criticising fine art before he is quite of age, and who continues the process for the sixteen years next ensuing, would but be ‘writing himself down an ass’ [...] were he to say that his opinions have undergone no modification.⁵⁰

Rossetti dates the beginning of his writing career to 1850, when both he and Stephens published in the *Germ*; in his view, it is only natural that a critic’s opinions would change between 1850 and the middle of the following decade. The same can be said of Stephens. In the 1850s he firmly believed that a work of art should serve a moral purpose and depict a discernible subject or narrative. His series in the *Crayon*, ‘The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms’, the subject of Chapter 7, was explicit in this regard: ‘we believe that the best application of painting may be made to moral and not to spiritual

⁴⁹ JEM, it will be remembered, intended the latter and he thanked Stephens for being the only reviewer who recognised it; Chapter 7, note 66.

⁵⁰ William Michael Rossetti, *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary* (London: Macmillan, 1867), vii–viii.

ends', he wrote in one article; 'every picture should have a motive in it [...] it should convey a lesson to the observer, or record some noble act', he declared in the next.⁵¹ Of course, he was speaking in relation to the paintings produced by the PRB in the late 1840s and 1850s, not yet disrupted by the new kind of British art that favoured mood and atmosphere over moralistic and narrative content.

Of course, Stephens's career was still in its early stages in the 1860s, and he worked industriously right up until his death in 1907. Future research could be devoted to his later art criticism, from his articles and reviews in the *Athenaeum* to his monographs and biographies of Victorian artists (Landseer, Mulready, Reynolds, Alma-Tadema), and his catalogues for exhibitions at the Grosvenor Gallery in the 1880s and 1890s. Some aspects of his writing have never been considered before: for example, he occasionally reviewed poetry for the *Athenaeum*, publishing criticism on newly published works.⁵² His later publications on the Pre-Raphaelites, such as his catalogue for the Millais exhibition at the Grosvenor in 1886 and his monograph on Rossetti published in 1894, both of which reprinted his analyses of the artists' works from the preceding decades, would give an understanding of how he continued to influence public perceptions of Pre-Raphaelitism long after the PRB as a structured group had fallen apart.

Although this thesis has offered the most comprehensive overview of Stephens's career as an artist so far, there are still discoveries to be made which will enhance our understanding of his art. I have not yet been able to access the Roberson Archive at the Hamilton Kerr Institute in Cambridge, which is currently closed to researchers. The index of the archive indicates that Stephens purchased art materials from Roberson's between 28 March 1853 and 11 May 1877.⁵³ This suggests that he continued to practice art even as late as the 1870s, even if in private. The Roberson ledgers would provide new insights into his choice of materials and the information could be correlated with I have already discovered about Stephens's working methods. Similarly, it has not been possible to provide a thorough technical analysis of his paintings, such as has been done for other Pre-Raphaelite pictures.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Stephens, 'Two Pre-Raphaelitisms', 292, 322.

⁵² For example, 'New Poetry', *Athenaeum* no. 2162 (3 April 1869): 467–68, reviewing several books by poets who are now forgotten, including R. W. Baddeley's *Cassandra and Other Poems* and Sophia May Eckley's *Minor Chords*. FGS also published an article on 'American Humorous Poetry' in *Macmillan's Magazine* 1 (January 1860): 203–11.

⁵³ *Index of Account Holders in the Roberson Archive 1820–1939* (Cambridge: Hamilton Kerr Institute, 1997), 209.

⁵⁴ Namely, the paintings analysed in Townsend, Hackney and Ridge, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques*.

Chapter 5 revealed the existence of several portraits Stephens is known to have painted in the early 1850s. The portrait of his father Septimus, exhibited at the RA in 1854, has not been seen since the early 1980s, and the one of Dorothy, exhibited in 1852, was apparently destroyed. In addition, the likeness of Charles Bridger, once in the Tate collection, was stolen in 1960 and probably also obliterated. There is hope, however, for the other paintings which were commissioned in the 1850s (at least five, judging by Stephens's letter to Hunt in June 1854).⁵⁵ For two of these I have been able to identify the sitters' names from Stephens's letters, but I have not yet been able to trace them to their current location.⁵⁶ Further research will hopefully locate the portraits and so make an additional contribution to our knowledge of the artist's work. Other works mentioned in Stephens's letters may have been lost forever, such as the self-portrait drawing which he made in 1852.

Regarding Stephens's art criticism, there is much more to be said about the ongoing progression of his critical opinions as well as his expanding art historical knowledge. The decades after 1870, which fell outside the chronological parameters of this thesis, saw Stephens become a fixture of the London art world, aided by his attachment to the *Athenaeum*, one of the major periodicals, and his authorship of numerous books on various aspects of British art as well as art history: monographs, biographies and surveys of historical European painting. A noticeable trend in his reviews and articles was his interest in, and endorsement of, new technologies for artistic reproduction, particularly photography. He had called for competent (rather than misleading) reproductions of historical paintings in 'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms' in 1856, as was mentioned in Chapter 7. Yet he also supported the dissemination of modern British paintings by means of skilled engravers, declaring in his pamphlet on Hunt in 1860 that 'a national service is rendered by the publication of really noble transcripts from noble pictures like [*The Light of the World*]. Where the pictures cannot go, the engravings penetrate'.⁵⁷ This argument continued throughout the 1860s, and he devoted an entire article to the subject of 'Cheap Art' in the first issue of the influential *Macmillan's Magazine*, also advocating photography as a useful tool for making efficient reproductions.⁵⁸ The *Athenaeum* was a useful way to spread his ideas. For example, he used a review of a religious tract

⁵⁵ See Chapter 5, p. 115, note 26.

⁵⁶ Appendix 1, Nos. 13 and 22.

⁵⁷ Stephens, *Hunt*, 79.

⁵⁸ Stephens, 'Cheap Art', 46–54.

about Hunt's *Light of the World* in 1862 as an excuse to lament the widespread consumption of poor quality reproductions of well-known paintings such as Leonardo's *The Last Supper*: 'a fortune might be made by the exhibition of a large good copy only of "The Last Supper" in English country towns. [...] If, instead of producing tawdry and stupid designs from scriptural themes [...] the Societies who disseminate cheap prints would but own the good sense of the people and fit it with good works!'⁵⁹ In keeping with his view of photography as an educational tool, his first published books, *Normandy: Its Gothic Architecture* (1865) and *Flemish Relics* (1866) were illustrated with photographic plates.

In addition to photography as a method of reproduction, he also admired the work of photographers who created images for artistic purposes. There has been considerable recent interest in the relationship between Victorian art and photography, particularly in relation to the Pre-Raphaelites, resulting in several books and exhibitions.⁶⁰ Stephens's contributions to this phenomenon provide further insights into the Pre-Raphaelite appreciation of the medium. He wrote a series of enthusiastic reviews of the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron in the *Athenaeum* in the 1860s, sympathising with her desire to elevate the medium to the status of the other fine arts. Cameron was exhibiting her prints in public for the first time, and where many of the established photographic journals criticised her unorthodox soft-focus technique, Stephens wrote appreciatively, hoping that 'something higher than mechanical success is attainable by the camera'.⁶¹ Cameron corresponded extensively with the Rossetti brothers and sent copies of her photographs to Dante Gabriel.⁶² She and Stephens were apparently also acquainted, as a letter from her in the Bodleian Library suggests.⁶³ There has not been

⁵⁹ [Frederic George Stephens], 'The Light of the World: Holman Hunt's Great Allegorical Picture Translated into Words', *Athenaeum* no. 1791 (22 February 1862): 264.

⁶⁰ Diane Waggoner et al., *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848–1875* (Farnham: Ashgate/Lund Humphries, 2010); Carol Jacobi and Hope Kingsley, *Painting with Light: Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age* (London: Tate Publishing, 2016); Philip Prodger, *Victorian Giants: The Birth of Victorian Art Photography* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2018).

⁶¹ 'Fine-Art Gossip', *Athenaeum* no. 1916 (16 July 1864): 88.

⁶² Joanne Lukitsh, "'Like a Lionardo": Exchanges between Julia Margaret Cameron and the Rossetti Brothers', in Waggoner, *Pre-Raphaelite Lens*, 137 and 140.

⁶³ Julia Margaret Cameron to FGS, 9 April 1862, FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 139–40: 'My dear Stephens, Here is an opportunity that I hope you will be able to avail yourself of. [See following letter.] Then you will hear the play & afterwards receive your copy of it. I would wish you to hear it so as to have the Author's own conception of it as taught to me. Answer Mrs Prescott soon & say yes. She tells me she has asked 'only an appreciating audience' – you & Mr Hunt & some few select. Yrs truly ever, Julia Margaret Cameron.' This is followed by a letter from Arabella Prescott to WHH, 9 April 1862, MS Don. e. 58, f. 141: 'Dear Mr Hunt, Could you spare some hours on Friday next to hear Mrs Cameron read Mr Henry Taylor's new play? From 12 to 2, then rest & luncheon, & from 2 to 5. If so, we shall be very glad to see you here.' The play was Henry Taylor's *St Clement's Eve* (1862). It is not known if FGS and WHH attended Cameron's recital.

space to discuss Stephens's reviews of Cameron's work in this thesis.

Christina Rossetti prophesied in 1853 that Stephens's 'public day' was 'long to dawn'. The aim of this thesis has been to re-establish the reputation of this hidden Pre-Raphaelite Brother as a maker of art and a writer on art within the Pre-Raphaelite circle. It has not always been easy to pin down Stephens's critical standpoints, and there are times when he contradicts himself in his criticism, on the one hand advocating moral, subject-driven art but at the same time being receptive to subjectless Aestheticism and beauty for its own sake. However, these contradictions, and Stephens's receptivity, reflect the wider changes within Pre-Raphaelitism itself from the 1850s through to the 1860s, 'from the literal towards the emblematic'.⁶⁴ In advance of Swinburne and Pater, he began to emphasise the purely visual qualities of a work of art, particularly colour which was for him 'as much an art as music'.

⁶⁴ Paraphrasing Rosenfeld, *John Everett Millais*, title of Chapter 3.

Bibliography

Publications by F. G. Stephens

Citations for Stephens's many articles in the *Critic* and *Athenaeum* are given in the preceding footnotes. See also Macleod, 'Stephens', 405–6, for a list of Stephens's published writings.

[John Seward, pseud.]. 'The Purpose and Tendency of Early Italian Art.' *The Germ: Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* no. 2 (February 1850): 58–64.

[Laura Savage, pseud.]. 'Modern Giants.' *Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature Conducted Principally by Artists* no. 4 (May 1850): 169–73.

'Some Remarks Upon the Life of B. R. Haydon, Historical Painter. Second Article', *Crayon* 3, no. 4 (April 1856): 107–110.

'The Reflection in Van Eyck's Mirror.' *Crayon* 3, no. 8 (August 1856): 236–39.

'The Two Pre-Raphaelitisms.' *Crayon* 3, no. 8 (August 1856): 225–28; 3, no. 10 (October 1856): 289–92; 3, no. 11 (November 1856): 321–24; 3, no. 12 (December 1856): 353–56; 4, no. 9 (September 1857): 261–65; 4, no. 10 (October 1857): 298–302; 4, no. 11 (November 1857): 325–29; 4, no. 12 (December 1857): 361–63.

'The Idea of a Picture.' *Crayon* 5, no. 3 (March 1858): 63–66.

'On Finish in Art.' *Crayon* 6, no. 7 (July 1859): 197–203.

'A Night on the Water.' *Titan* (July 1859): 659–66.

'The Art-Exhibitions of 1859.' *Titan* (September 1859): 29–42.

'Cheap Art.' *Macmillan's Magazine* 1, no. 1 (November 1859): 46–54.

'The Royal Academy.' *Macmillan's Magazine* 2, no. 8 (June 1860): 155–64.

William Holman Hunt and His Works: A Memoir of the Artist's Life, with Descriptions of His Pictures. London: Nisbet, 1860.

'The Royal Academy', *Macmillan's Magazine* 4, no. 21 (July 1861): 205–15.

Normandy: Its Gothic Architecture and History. London: A. W. Bennett, 1865.

Flemish Relics: Architectural, Legendary and Pictorial, as Connected with Public Buildings in Belgium [...] Illustrated with Photographs by Cundall and Fleming. London: Alfred W. Bennett, 1866.

'A Day on the Water.' *Macmillan's Magazine* 15, no. 87 (January 1867): 227–36.

Exhibition of the Works of Sir John E. Millais, Bt., R.A. London: The Grosvenor Gallery, 1886.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti. London: Seeley and Co., 1894.

'To the Editor.' *Times* (16 February 1906): 4.

Other Primary Sources

Allen, Vivian, ed. *Dear Mr Rossetti: The Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Hall Caine 1878–1881*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.

Allingham, William. *Poems by William Allingham*. Ed. Helen Allingham. London: Macmillan and

- Co., 1912.
- Allingham, Helen, and E. Baumer Williams, eds. *Letters to William Allingham*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911.
- Bate, Percy. *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters: Their Associates and Successors*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1899.
- Baudelaire, Charles. 'The Salon of 1846.' In *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*. Translated by P. E. Charvet. London: Penguin, 1972, 47–107.
- Bradbury, Sue, ed. *The Boyce Papers: The Letters and Diaries of Joanna Boyce, Henry Wells and George Price Boyce*. 2 vols. Boydell and Brewer, 2019.
- Brown, Ford Madox. 'On the Mechanism of a Historical Picture, Part I. The Design.' *The Germ: Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* no. 2 (February 1850): 70–73.
- Browning, Robert. *Poetical Works, 1833–1864*. Edited by Ian Jack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Burne-Jones, Edward. 'Mr Ruskin's New Volume.' *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (April 1856): 212–25.
- Burne-Jones, Georgiana. *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co., 1904.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Translated by Nevill Coghill. London: Penguin, 2003.
- Colvin, Sidney. 'Rossetti as a Painter.' *The Magazine of Art* 4 (1883): 177–183.
- Coombs, James H., et al., eds. *A Pre-Raphaelite Friendship: The Correspondence of William Holman Hunt and John Lucas Tupper*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1986.
- Fredeman, William E., ed. *The P.R.B. Journal: William Michael Rossetti's Diary of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1849–1853*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- — — —. *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. 10 vols. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002–15.
- Hamilton, Walter. *The Aesthetic Movement in England*. London: Reeves and Turner, 1882.
- Hunt, William Holman. 'The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: A Fight for Art. I.' *Contemporary Review* 49 (April 1886): 471–88.
- — — —. *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1905.
- — — —. 'To the Editor.' *Daily Telegraph* (26 March 1907): 9.
- Malory, Sir Thomas. *The Byrth, Lyf, and Actes of Kyng Arthur; of His Noble Knyghtes of the Rounde Table* [...]. Ed. William Upcott, With an Introduction and Notes by Robert Southey. London: Longham, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1817.
- Minto, W., ed. *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*. 2 vols. London: James R. Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., 1892.
- Millais, John Guille. *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*. 2 vols. London: Methuen and Co., 1899.
- Morris, William. 'The Story of the Unknown Church.' *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (January 1856): 28–33.
- — — —. *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*. London: Bell and Daldy, 1858.
- Pater, Walter. 'Poems by William Morris.' *Westminster Review* 34, no. 2 (October 1868): 300–12.
- — — —. 'Notes on Leonardo da Vinci.' *Fortnightly Review* 6, no. 35 (November 1869): 494–508.

- . ‘A Fragment on Sandro Botticelli.’ *Fortnightly Review* 8, no. 44 (1 August 1870): 155–60.
- . ‘The School of Giorgione.’ *Fortnightly Review* 22, no. 130 (October 1877): 526–38.
- . *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Ed. Matthew Beaumont. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Patmore, Coventry. ‘Walls and Wall Painting at Oxford.’ *Saturday Review* (26 December 1857): 584.
- Peattie, Roger W., ed. *Selected Letters of William Michael Rossetti*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990.
- Quilter, Harry. ‘The New Renaissance; or, The Gospel of Intensity.’ *Macmillan’s Magazine* 42 (September 1880): 391–400.
- . *Preferences in Art, Life and Literature*. London: Swann, Sonnenschein & Co., 1892.
- Rossetti, Christina. *New Poems by Christina Rossetti*. Edited by William Michael Rossetti. London: Macmillan, 1896.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel. ‘Hand and Soul.’ *The Germ: Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature and Art* no. 1 (January 1850): 23–33.
- . *Poems*. London: Ellis and White, 1881.
- . *Ballads and Sonnets*. London: F. S. Ellis, 1881.
- Rossetti, William Michael. ‘Art News from England. Letter XI [20 January 1856].’ *Crayon* 3, no. 3 (March 1856): 87–88.
- . ‘Art News from England. Letter XIV [20 April 1856].’ *Crayon* 3, no. 6 (June 1856): 181–83.
- . ‘Art News from England. Letter XV [20 May 1856].’ *Crayon* 3, no. 7 (July 1856): 209–12.
- . ‘The Royal Academy Exhibition.’ *Fraser’s Magazine* 67, no. 402 (June 1863): 783–95.
- . *Fine Art, Chiefly Contemporary*. London: Macmillan, 1867.
- , ed. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters with a Memoir*, 2 vols. London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895.
- , ed. *Ruskin: Rossetti: PreRaphaelitism: Papers 1854 to 1862*. London: George Allen, 1899.
- , ed. *Præraphaelite Diaries and Letters*. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1900.
- , ed. *The Germ [...] Being a Facsimile Reprint of the Literary Organ of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Published in 1850: With an Introduction*. London: Stock, 1901.
- . ‘Dante Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal.’ *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 1 (May 1903): 273–95.
- . *Some Reminiscences*. 2 vols. London: Ellis, 1906.
- . ‘F. G. Stephens.’ *Athenaeum* no. 4142 (16 March 1907): 329.
- Rossetti, William Michael, and Algernon Charles Swinburne. *Notes on the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1868*. London: John Camden Hotten, 1868.
- Ruskin, John. ‘The Pre-Raffaelites.’ *Times* (13 May 1851): 8–9.
- . ‘The Pre-Raphaelite Artists.’ *Times* (30 May 1851): 8–9.
- . *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*. Eds. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn. 39 vols. London: George Allen, 1903–12.
- . ‘A New and Noble School’: *Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites*. Edited by Stephens Wildman. London: Pallas Athene, 2012.

- Seiler, R. M. *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1980.
- Siddall, Elizabeth Eleanor. *My Ladys Soul: The Poems of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall*. Edited by Serena Trowbridge. Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2018.
- Surtees, Virginia, ed. *The Diary of Ford Madox Brown*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.
- — — —, ed. *The Diaries of George Price Boyce*. Littlehampton: Real World Publications, 1981.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles. ‘Charles Baudelaire: *Les fleurs du mal*.’ *Spectator* (6 September 1862): 998–1000.
- — — —. *William Blake: A Critical Essay*. London: John Camden Hotten, 1868.
- Symons, Arthur. *Studies in Prose and Verse*. London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1904.
- Tennyson, Alfred. *Poems*. 2 vols. London: Edward Moxon, 1842.
- — — —. *Poems of Tennyson, 1829–1868*. Edited by Sir Herbert Warren. London: Oxford University Press, 1929.
- Tupper, John Lucas. ‘Extracts from the Diary of an Artist. No. VI.’ *Crayon* 2, no. 26 (26 December 1855): 400–1.
- — — —. *Poems by the Late John Lucas Tupper*. Edited by William Michael Rossetti. London: Longmans Green, 1897.
- Whistler, James McNeill. *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. New York: F. Stokes, 1890.
- Wood, Esther. *Dante Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement*. London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1894.
- Woolner, Amy. *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1917.

Secondary Sources Relating to Stephens

- Anonymous. ‘One of the Pre-Raphaelites: When F. G. Stephens Taught Drawing at University College School.’ *Times* (26 February 1959): 12.
- De Montfort, Patricia. ‘“Two to make a Brotherhood”: F. G. Stephens, Art Criticism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.’ *Review of the Pre-Raphaelite Society* 16, no. 2 (2008): 57–69.
- Duval, Mary Susan. ‘An Examination of the Work of F. G. Stephens (1828–1907) as an Artist and Art Critic.’ PhD diss., University of London, 1988.
- Grylls, Rosalie Glynn. ‘The Correspondence of F. G. Stephens.’ *Times Literary Supplement* (5 April 1957): 216; (12 April 1957): 232.
- Macleod, Dianne Sachko. ‘F. G. Stephens, Pre-Raphaelite Critic and Art Historian.’ *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 999 (June 1986): 398–406.
- — — —. ‘Mid-Victorian Patronage of the Arts: F. G. Stephens’s “The Private Collections of England”.’ *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 1001 (August 1986): 597–607.
- — — —. ‘Stephens, Frederic George (1827–1907).’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36272>]
- Manson, James Bolivar. *Frederick George Stephens and the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers: With Reproductions of Twenty-Four Pictures from his Collection*. London: Privately published by Donald Macbeth at the Historic House, Fleet Street, 1920.
- Steele, Robert. ‘Stephens, Frederic George.’ *Dictionary of National Biography. Second Supplement*, 3 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1912), 3:405–6.

- Taylor, Basil. 'F. G. Stephens and the P.R.B.' *Architectural Review* 104, no. 30 (October 1948): 171–178.
- Wilkes, Robert. "'My quondam friend of nearly half our lives": Holman Hunt's Relationship with F. G. Stephens.' *Review of the Pre-Raphaelite Society* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 2018): 30–47.

Other Secondary Sources

- Altick, Richard D. *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1800–1900*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1985.
- — — —. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1998.
- Atkinson, Juliette. *Victorian Biography Reconsidered: A Study of Nineteenth-Century 'Hidden' Lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Banham, Joanna, and Jennifer Harris. *William Morris and the Middle Ages*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- Barlow, Paul. *Time Past and Time Present: The Art of John Everett Millais*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
- Barringer, Tim. *Reading the Pre-Raphaelites*. Revised edition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012.
- — — —. 'Art, Music and Emotions in the Aesthetic Movement.' *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2016). [<https://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/articles/10.16995/ntn.784/>]
- Barringer, Tim, Jason Rosenfeld and Alison Smith. *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant-Garde*. London: Tate Publishing, 2012.
- Bennett, Mary. *Ford Madox Brown: A Catalogue Raisonné*. 2 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- — — —. 'A Check List of Pre-Raphaelite Pictures Exhibited at Liverpool, 1849–67, and Some of Their Northern Collectors.' *Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 728 (November 1963): 486–95.
- Bentley, D. M. R. 'Making an Unfrequented Path of Art His Own: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Paintings in the Aesthetic Mode.' *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 17 (Spring 2008): 21–35.
- Brake, Laurel, and Julie F. Codell. *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Bronkurst, Judith. *William Holman Hunt: A Catalogue Raisonné*. 2 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Brown, David. 'Pre-Raphaelite Drawings in the Bryson Bequest to the Ashmolean Museum.' *Master Drawings* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 287–293.
- Bryant, Barbara. '1864: New Art Ascendant.' In *The Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition: A Chronicle, 1769–2018*. Edited by Mark Hallett, Sarah Victoria Turner and Jessica Feather. London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2018.
- Buron, Melissa, et al. *Truth & Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters*. Munich: Prestel, 2018.
- Calloway, Stephen, and Lynn Federle Orr, eds. *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement, 1860–1900*. London: V&A Publishing, 2011.
- Casteras, Susan P. *Images of Victorian Womanhood in English Art*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987.
- — — —. *English Pre-Raphaelitism and Its Reception in America in the Nineteenth Century*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990.

- Casteras, Susan P., and Alicia Craig Faxon, eds. *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Its European Context*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995.
- Cheeke, Stephen. *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2010.
- Codell, Julie F. 'Painting Keats: Pre-Raphaelite Artists Between Social Transgressions and Painterly Conventions.' *Victorian Poetry* 33, no. 3/4 (Autumn–Winter 1995): 341–70.
- — — —. 'Constructing the Victorian Artist: National Identity, the Political Economy of Art and Biographical Mania in the Periodical Press.' *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 283–316.
- — — —. 'The Art Press and Its Parodies: Unravelling Networks in Swinburne's 1868 *Academy Notes*.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 165–83.
- Cooper, Robyn. 'The Relationship between the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Painters before Raphael in English Criticism of the Late 1850s and 1850s.' *Victorian Studies* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1981): 405–38.
- Cruise, Colin. *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2011.
- Curtis, Gerard. *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book in Victorian England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- Dellamora, Richard. *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Demoor, Maryssa. *Their Fair Share: Women, Power and Criticism in the Athenaeum, from Millicent Garrett Fawcett to Katherine Mansfield, 1870–1920*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Elzea, Betty. *Frederick Sandys, 1829–1904: A Catalogue Raisonné*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2001.
- Evans, Mark, and Stefan Weppelmann. *Botticelli Reimagined*. London: V&A Publishing, 2016.
- Ferber, Linda S., and Nancy K. Anderson. *The American Pre-Raphaelites: Radical Realists*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019.
- Fleming, G. H. *Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*. London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1967.
- Fredeman, William E. *Pre-Raphaelitism: A Bibliocritical Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Funnell, Peter, et al. *Millais: Portraits*. London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999.
- Gatens, William J. 'John Ruskin and Music.' *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 1986): 77–97
- Gaunt, William. *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1942.
- Gere, J. A. *Pre-Raphaelite Drawings in the British Museum*. London: British Museum Press, 1994.
- Giebelhausen, Michaela, and Tim Barringer, eds. *Writing the Pre-Raphaelites: Text, Context, Subtext*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Golden, Catherine J., ed. *Book Illustrated: Text, Image, and Culture, 1770–1930*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000.
- Goldman, Paul, and Simon Cooke, eds. *Reading Victorian Illustration, 1855–1875: Spoils of the Lumber Room*. Routledge, 2012.
- Graham, Jenny. *Inventing Van Eyck: The Remaking of an Artist for the Modern Age*. Oxford: Berg, 2007.
- Grieve, Alastair. 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the Anglican High Church', *Burlington Magazine* 111, no. 794 (May 1969): 294–95.
- — — —. *The Art of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Pre-Raphaelite Period, 1848–50*. Hingham: Real World Publications, 1973.

- — — —. *1. Found, 2. The Pre-Raphaelite Modern-Life Subject*. Hingham: Real World Publications, 1976.
- — — —. *The Watercolours and Drawings of 1850–1855*. Hingham: Real World Publications, 1978.
- — — —. *The Best Years of Rossetti's Art, 1846–1862*. Norwich: Real World, 2017.
- Grylls, Rosalie Glynn. *Portrait of Rossetti*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1970.
- Hackney, Stephen, ed. *Completing the Picture: Materials and Techniques of Twenty-Six Paintings in the Tate Gallery*. London: Tate Publishing, 1982.
- Hallett, Mark, Sarah Victoria Turner and Jessica Feather. *The Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition: A Chronicle, 1769–2018*. London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2018.
- Hancher, Michael. 'Urgent Private Affairs: Millais's *Peace Concluded, 1856*.' *Burlington Magazine* 133, no. 1061 (August 1991): 499–506.
- Harding, Ellen. *Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*. Aldershot: Scolar, 1996.
- Harding, James. *The Pre-Raphaelites*. London: Academy Editions, 1977.
- Hares-Stryker, Carolyn, ed. *An Anthology of Pre-Raphaelite Writings*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 1997.
- Harrison, Colin. *The Pre-Raphaelites and Italy*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2011.
- Haskins, Katherine. *The Art-Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850–1880*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012.
- Heffernan, James A. W. *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Helsing, Elizabeth. *Poetry and the Pre-Raphaelite Arts: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Hewison, Robert, ed. *Ruskin's Artists: Studies in the Victorian Visual Economy*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Heywood, Andrew. 'The Gospel of Intensity: 'Arry, William Morris and the Aesthetic Movement.' *Journal of William Morris Studies* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 14–25.
- Holman-Hunt, Diana. *My Grandfather: His Wives and Loves*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969.
- Holmes, John. *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Hunt, Violet. *The Wife of Rossetti: Her Life and Death*. London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1932.
- Inglis, Alison, and Cecilia O'Brien. "'The Breaking of the Web': William Holman Hunt's two early versions of *The Lady of Shalott*." *Art Bulletin of Victoria* 32, 18 June 2014, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-breaking-of-the-web-william-holman-hunts-two-early-versions-of-the-lady-of-shalott/>.
- Ironside, Robin, and John Gere. *Pre-Raphaelite Painters*. London: Phaidon Press, 1948.
- Jacobi, Carol. *William Holman Hunt: Painter, Painting, Paint*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Jacobi, Carol, and Hope Kingsley. *Painting with Light: Art and Photography from the Pre-Raphaelites to the Modern Age*. London: Tate Publishing, 2016.
- Jung, Sandro, ed. *British Literature and Print Culture*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013.
- Kestern, Joseph A. *Masculinities in Victorian Painting*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995.
- Lalumia, Matthew Paul. *Realism and Politics in Victorian Art of the Crimean War*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984.

- Landow, George P. *William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Lanigan, Dennis T., Christopher Newall and Sonia Del Re. *Beauty's Awakening: Drawings by the Pre-Raphaelites and their Contemporaries from the Lanigan Collection*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2015.
- Lanigan, Denis T. 'The First Pre-Raphaelite Group Exhibition.' *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 17 (Spring 2008): 9–19.
- L'Enfant, Julie Chandler. 'Truth in Art: William Michael Rossetti and Nineteenth-Century Realist Criticism.' PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1996.
- Levy, Michael. 'Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England.' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 nos. 3–4 (July–December 1960): 291–306.
- Lochnan, Katharine, and Carol Jacobi, eds. *Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Vision*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Lukitsh, Joanne. "'Like a Lionardo": Exchanges between Julia Margaret Cameron and the Rossetti Brothers.' In Diane Waggoner, et al. *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848–1875*. Farnham: Ashgate/Lund Humphries, 2010, 134–45.
- Lynch, Kathryn L. *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Maas, Jeremy. *Gambart: Prince of the Victorian Art World*. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1975.
- . *Holman Hunt and The Light of the World*. London: Scolar Press, 1984.
- . *The Victorian Art World in Photographs*. London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1984.
- Macleod, Dianne Sachko. *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Mancoff, Debra N. *The Arthurian Revival in Victorian Art*. New York: Garland, 1990.
- , ed. *John Everett Millais: Beyond the Brotherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Marchand, Leslie A. *The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1941.
- Marsh, Jan. *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood*. London: Quartet, 1985.
- . *The Legend of Elizabeth Siddal*. London: Quartet, 1989.
- . *Elizabeth Siddal: Pre-Raphaelite Artist, 1829–1862*. Sheffield: The Ruskin Gallery, 1991.
- . *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999.
- Marsh, Jan, and Pamela Gerrish Nunn. *Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement*. London: Virago Press, 1989.
- Meisel, Martin. *Realizations: Narratives, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Morgan, Thais E. 'Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism: Swinburne and Pater.' *Victorian Studies* 36, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 315–22.
- Newall, Christopher. *Pre-Raphaelites: Beauty and Rebellion*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016.
- Owens, Susan. 'Literature and the Aesthetic Movement.' In *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement, 1860–1900*. Edited by Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr. London: V&A Publishing, 2011.

- Owens, Susan, and Nicholas Tromans, eds. *Christina Rossetti: Poetry in Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Paintings and Drawings of the Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle*. Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA: 1946.
- Parris, Leslie, ed. *The Pre-Raphaelites*. London: Tate Publishing, 1984.
- , ed. *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. London: Tate Publishing, 1984.
- Payne, Christiana. *John Brett: Pre-Raphaelite Landscape Painter*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.
- . *Objects of Affection: Pre-Raphaelite Portraits by John Brett*. Bristol: Sansom & Co., 2010.
- . ‘John Constable, John Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelites.’ *British Art Journal* 16, no. 1 (Summer 2015): 78–87.
- Peattie, Roger. ‘William Michael Rossetti’s Contributions to the *Athenaeum*.’ *Victorian Periodicals Review* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 148–155.
- . ‘Whistler and W. M. Rossetti: “Always on the Easiest and Pleasantest Terms”.’ *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 4 (Spring 1995): 85.
- Pointon, Marcia, ed. *Pre-Raphaelite Re-viewed*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989.
- Poulson, Christine. *The Quest for the Grail: Arthurian Legend in British Art, 1840–1920*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Prettejohn, Elizabeth, ed. *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- . *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- . *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*. London: Tate Publishing, 2007.
- , ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Pre-Raphaelites*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- . *Modern Painters, Old Masters: The Art of Imitation from the Pre-Raphaelites to the First World War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.
- Prodger, Phillip. *Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography*. London: National Portrait Gallery, 2018.
- Read, Benedict, and Joanna Barnes, eds. *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture, 1848–1914*. London: Henry Moor Foundation in association with Lund Humphries, 1991.
- Roach, Catherine. *Pictures-within-Pictures in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Roberts, Leonard. *Arthur Hughes: His Life and Work: A Catalogue Raisonné*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors’ Club, 1997.
- Roe, Dinah, ed. *The Pre-Raphaelites: From Rossetti to Ruskin*. London: Penguin, 2010.
- . *The Rossetti in Wonderland: A Victorian Family History*. London: Haus, 2011.
- . ‘Words About the Picture: Material and Metaphor in Dante Rossetti’s Inscribed Picture Frames.’ *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 27 (Fall 2018): 33–55.
- Rosenfeld, Jason, and Alison Smith. *Millais*. London: Tate Publishing, 2007.
- Rosenfeld, Jason. *John Everett Millais*. London: Phaidon Press, 2012.
- Roskill, Mark. ‘Holman Hunt’s Differing Versions of the “Light of the World”.’ *Victorian Studies* 6, no. 3 (March 1963): 228–44.

- Simpson, Roger. *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800–1849*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1990.
- Smith, Roger. ‘Bonnard’s Costume Historique – a Pre-Raphaelite Source Book.’ *Costume* 7, no. 1 (1973): 23–37.
- Smith, Alison. *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.
- — — —, et al. *Reflections: Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites*. London: National Gallery, 2017.
- — — —, ed. *Edward Burne-Jones*. London: Tate Publishing, 2018.
- Smith, Lindsay. *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry: The Enigma of Visibility in Ruskin, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Spinozzi, Paola, and Elisa Bizzotto. *The Germ: Origins and Progenies of Pre-Raphaelite Interart Aesthetics*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012.
- Allen Staley. *The Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*. 2nd edition. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- — — —, et al. *Pre-Raphaelite Vision: Truth to Nature*. London: Tate, 2004.
- — — —. *The New Painting of the 1860s: Between the Pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic Movement*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Stanford, Derek, ed. *Pre-Raphaelite Writing: An Anthology*. London: Dent, 1973.
- Surtees, Virginia. *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Catalogue Raisonné*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Sussman, Herbert. *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Politics in Victorian Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Teukolsky, Rachel. *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Thirlwell, Angela. *William and Lucy: The Other Rossettis*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Townsend, Joyce, Jacqueline Ridge and Stephen Hackney. *Pre-Raphaelite Painting Techniques, 1848–56*. London: Tate Publishing, 2004.
- Treuherz, Julian. *Ford Madox Brown: Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer*. London: Philip Wilson for Manchester Art Gallery, 2011.
- Treuherz, Julian, Elizabeth Prettejohn and Edwin Becker. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2003.
- Upstone, Robert. *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream: Paintings and Drawings from the Tate Collection*. London: Tate Publishing, 2003.
- Vann, J. Don, and Rosemary T. VanArsdel. *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*. Aldershot: Scolar, 1994.
- Verhoogt, Robert. *Art in Reproduction: Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israëls and Ary Scheffer*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.
- — — —. ‘Free Access to the History of Art: Art Reproduction and the Appropriation of the History of Art in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture.’ In *Free Access to the Past: Romanticism, Cultural Heritage and the Nation*. Edited by Lotte Eilskov Jensen, Joseph Theodoor Leerssen and Marita Mathijssen. Leiden: Brill, 2010. 156–57.
- Waggoner, Diane, et al. *The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848–1875*. Farnham: Ashgate/Lund Humphries, 2010.
- Wainsworth, Maryan Wynn. *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Double Work of Art*. New Haven, CT:

- Yale University Gallery, 1976.
- Walkley, Giles. *Artists' Houses in London, 1764–1914*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994.
- Warner, Malcolm. 'John Everett Millais's *Autumn Leaves*: "a picture full of beauty and without subject".' In *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. Edited by Leslie Parris. London: Tate Publishing, 1984, 126–42.
- 'The Pre-Raphaelites and the National Gallery.' *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 1–11.
- — — —, ed. *The Pre-Raphaelites in Context*. San Marino, CA: H. E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1992.
- Watkinson, Raymond. *Pre-Raphaelite Art and Design*. London: Studio Vista, 1970.
- Watson, Margaretta Frederick, ed. *Collecting the Pre-Raphaelites: The Anglo-American Enchantment*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997.
- Weinberg, Gail S. 'Ruskin, Pater, and the Rediscovery of Botticelli.' *Burlington Magazine* 129, no. 1006 (January 1987): 25–27.
- — — —. 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Salutation of Beatrice" and Camille Bonnard's "Costumes Historiques".' *Burlington Magazine* 141, no. 1159 (October 1999): 622–23.
- Werner, Marcia. *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Wilkes, Robert. 'The 1860s Watercolours of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.' *British Art Journal* 18, no. 3 (Winter 2017/2018): 48–55.
- Wildman, Stephen. *Waking Dreams: The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites from the Delaware Art Museum*. Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2004.
- Worth, George J. *Macmillan's Magazine, 1859–1907: 'No Flippancy of Abuse Allowed'*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
- Yamaguchi, Eriko. 'Rossetti's Use of Bonnard's "Costumes Historique": A Further Examination, with an Appendix on Other Pre-Raphaelite Artists', *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 9 (Fall 2000): 5–36.
- Yearwood, Claire. 'The Looking-Glass World: Mirrors in Pre-Raphaelite Painting 1850–1915.' PhD diss., University of York, 2014.
- Yeates, Amelia, and Serena Trowbridge, eds. *Pre-Raphaelite Masculinities: Constructions of Masculinity in Art and Literature*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.
- Young, Andrew McLaren, et al. *The Paintings of James McNeill Whistler*. 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980.

Appendix 1: Catalogue of Paintings and Drawings by F. G. Stephens

Works are arranged chronologically. Many works are no longer extant but are recorded in Stephens's letters and other primary sources; incorporating them into this catalogue enlarges his oeuvre beyond what has previously been acknowledged. A 'Miscellaneous' section contains works of uncertain date and attribution, or that are not easily categorised. For portraits, the sitters' names, if they are known, are given as the titles.

1: The Virgin and St Anne 1848

Location unknown.

Mentioned by Hunt in *PR&PRB*, 1:129, Hunt speaking to Millais shortly before the PRB was founded in September 1848: "[Stephens] is now working in my studio on a little picture of 'The Virgin and St. Ann', the most mediæval of his last three designs. You saw the drawing of it."

2: Studies for *Dethe and the Riotours* ca. 1848

Pen and ink on paper.

The author's collection.

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; ... ; bt Jeremy Maas, together with Stephens's personal annotated copy of his pamphlet *William Holman Hunt and his Works* (1860); given by Rupert Maas to the author on 3 April 2019.

Subject from Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*. Small studies for No. 3.

3: *Dethe and the Riotours* 1848–53/54

Pen and black ink on off-white paper, 29.5 x 44.6 cm.

Signed with monogram 'FGS' and 'Frederic G. Stephens'. Inscribed under drawing 'DETHE and the RIOTOURS / Chaucer, v. 12575, Pardoner's Tale', with dates 'Composed 1848, Drawn 1852', dedication 'Dante G. Rossetti from his P.R.B. / F.G.S.'. An earlier inscription has been erased but is partially legible: '... to G. Rossetti / July – 1854'. On verso a long extract from Chaucer's *The Pardoner's Tale*, and the date 'July 1st 1853'.

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (WA1977.106).

Provenance: Given by F. G. Stephens to D. G. Rossetti, 1854; [William Michael Rossetti?]; ... ; bt John Bryson; Bryson's bequest to the Ashmolean, 1977.

Exhibited: *The Poetry of Drawing: Pre-Raphaelite Designs, Studies and Watercolours*, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2011 (no. 50).

Literature: David Brown, 'Pre-Raphaelite Drawings in the Bryson Bequest to the Ashmolean Museum', *Master Drawings* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1978): 288, 293; Colin Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011), 46 and 235.

4: Morte d'Arthur (King Arthur and Sir Bedivere) 1849

Oil on panel (unfinished), 59.5 x 74 cm.

Signed with monogram 'FGS' lower right and 'PRB' lower left.

Tate (N04635).

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; part of Holman Stephens's bequest to the Tate, 1932.

Literature: Deborah Mancoff, *The Arthurian Revival in Victorian Art* (New York: Garland, 1990), 142–44.

5: Dorothy Mary Stephens (The Artist's Stepmother) ca. 1850

Graphite on paper, 19.4 x 17.5 cm.

Tate (N04632).

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; part of Holman's bequest to the Tate, 1932.

Exhibited: *BP Spotlight: Pre-Raphaelite Works on Paper*, Tate Britain, London, 2015–17.

Possibly an early study for No. 12.

6: Copy of Hans Holbein's *Archbishop William Warham* 1850

Oil on panel, 81 x 65 cm.

New College, University of Oxford.

Provenance: Commissioned by James Wyatt Jr., Oxford, 1850; bt New College, University of Oxford, April 1851.

7: The Marquis's Interview with Janicula (from *The Clerk's Tale*) 1850

Location unknown.

Study for No. 9. *PRBJ*, 2 February 1850: 'Stephens has made a design from the story of Griseldis of the Marquis's interview with her father; he means to set about painting the subject forthwith, and swears he will have it ready for the Exhibition'.

8: Griselda Parting from her Child (from *The Clerk's Tale*) 1850

Location unknown.

Mentioned in *PRBJ*, 9 February 1850, as another Chaucer design by Stephens besides Nos. 3 and 9, 'Griseldis parting from her child'.

9: The Proposal (The Marquis and Griselda) 1850–1

Oil on canvas, 80.6 x 64.8 cm.

Signed with monogram 'FGS' lower right.

Tate (N04633).

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; part of Holman's bequest to the Tate, 1932.

Exhibited: *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand and Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, USA, 2003–4 (no. 5); *Love & Desire: Pre-Raphaelite Masterpieces from the Tate*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2018–19 (); *Preraphaeliti, Amore e Desiderio*, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 2019.

Literature: Manson 1920, Plate 1; Robert Upstone, *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream: Paintings and Drawings from the Tate Collection* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), 40; Carol Jacobi and Lucinda Ward, *Love & Desire: Pre-Raphaelite Masterpieces from the Tate* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2018).

A restoration record for No. 9 in the Tate Archives, dated October 1955, shows that the picture was damaged by water from a burst pipe while it was hanging in Screen Room No. 61 of the Tate Gallery during the winter of 1954. Losses along the bottom edge of the painting occurred before it was possible to apply treatment. Restorers relined the painting with wax-resin adhesive on new canvas. On the back of the original canvas was a stencilled mark: 'JOHN REEVES / 98 JOHN ST. / TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD'. Retouching was done with dried pigments and egg tempera.

10: 'Take, oh! take those lips away' (from *Measure for Measure*) 1850–1

Location unknown.

PRBJ, 2 December 1850: 'Stephens [...] has painted a little on his picture [No. 9] since getting back [from Sevenoaks], and hopes to have another ready for the [RA] exhibition as well, illustrative of the song – "Take, oh! take those lips away" [from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Act 4, Scene 1]'. Then again, on 9 February 1851: 'Stephens has made some studies for [his picture illustrating the song "Take, oh! take those lips] away"'. It is not known if Stephens began painting this subject.

11: Portrait 1851

Location unknown.

Mentioned in a letter from Stephens to William Michael Rossetti, 4 June 1851: 'I shall not be able to be at Woolner's till late as I have to suffer under a monster whose portrait I am painting' (ADC, Box 18, Folder 10).

12: Dorothy Mary Stephens ca. 1852

Oil on canvas, 52 x 38 cm approx.

Presumed destroyed

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son Holman, 1915; badly damaged by flooding while stored in the basement of 9 Hammersmith Terrace, 1928; thence to James Arthur Iggulden, 1931; by descent to Iggulden's son Michael, 1979; location unknown.

Exhibited: 1852, RA (231, titled 'Portrait').

Literature: Manson 1920, Plate 4.

A letter from Charles Aitken, Director of the National Gallery of British Art, to Holman Stephens, 28 January 1928, states that '[u]nfortunately the portrait of your grandmother has suffered badly. The head seems pretty right but a lot of the paint has [?] [...] Will you look in sometime and see a [?] about your grandmother's portrait? I am keeping it carefully under a sheet of blotting paper' (CSRM).

A copy of a letter from Holman Stephens to Charles Aitken, 19 December 1928, indicates that he asked 'Mr [William] Morrill the N.G. Restorer to reline the oil portrait of my Grandfather [No. 16] and my Grandmother'; a note added by Holman Stephens states that the pictures were not ready when he called at the Gallery on 8 May 1929 (CSRM).

Letter from James Arthur Iggulden to Anne d'Harnoncourt, 22 March 1967: 'I have in my possession the portraits Stephens did of his mother and father. The one of his father [No. 16] is in very good condition. Unfortunately the one of his mother was damaged by flood water from the Thames during the 1920s when it was stored in the basement of 9, Hammersmith Terrace which has caused a fair amount of the paint to fall away from the canvas and I have never taken any steps to get the picture restored' (Tate Archive).

Duval, 'Stephens', 33–34, note 74, states: 'Further investigation has revealed that the portrait of Mrs Stephens was eventually destroyed by Michael, Iggulden's son, following his father's death in [1979]. The portrait of Mr Stephens [No. 16] is still missing, as is Michael Iggulden himself'. I have been unable to verify that Michael Iggulden actually destroyed the portrait of Dorothy and have been prevented from corresponding with him directly.

13: Thomas Noton 1852

Location unknown.

Known from two letters in the Bodleian. The first is dated 20 May 1852: 'Mr Noton desired me to let you know, that he is at liberty every evening except Friday, if you can make it convenient to wait upon him' (letter from [name illegible], MS. Don. e. 58, f. 107). Noton wrote to Stephens on 4 June from 129 Upper Street, Islington, saying he 'shall be at home tomorrow (Saturday [5th]) evening by $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 if that time will suit to finish the likeness' (MS. Don. e. 58, f. 108).

The timing of these letters suggests that Noton may have asked Stephens to paint his portrait after seeing No. 12 in the 1852 RA exhibition, which had opened on 3 May; the first letter, apparently to arrange Noton's first sitting, was written later that month.

The 1851 census lists Thomas Noton, a draper, aged 35, living at 129A Upper Street, Islington, with his wife Frances Grace, aged 37, and their 6-year-old son Thomas.

14: Portrait of a Child named Smith 1852

Location unknown.

Stephens to Mrs M. Smith, 14 September 1852: 'It will not escape your memory that when I had the pleasure of seeing you, you accepted my offer to paint the portrait of your Infant. If it would be acceptable to yourself and Mr Smith I will commence it at once which I believe you preferred [...] I shall have particular pleasure in executing this Portrait and trust you will favour me by accepting it as a slight acknowledgement of [many?] kindness' (CSRM, 2015.47.114).

Then from Mrs M. Smith to Stephens, 21 September 1852, apologising that as 'my little boy is very poorly' he cannot sit for the portrait, but they will come to Stephens on the evening of Friday 24th (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 151–52).

Stephens wrote to Mrs Smith on 22 September 1852: 'Dear Madam, it was with much regret that I received your note informing me your little Boy was too unwell to sit last evening, but I hope

he will be quite recovered before Friday evening, the time you appoint, when I shall have great pleasure in commencing the young gentleman's portrait. I presume the same hour (5 p.m.) will be agreeable to you as named for yesterday when I shall not fail to be at home, – but if anything should intervene to postpone your visit perhaps you will favour me with a note as before naming a time perfectly suitable to yourself which whenever it may be will find me entirely at your command' (Getty Research Institute).

It is possible, of course, that this portrait was never made.

15: Self-Portrait 1852

Drawing.

Location unknown.

In a letter from October 1852, Stephens expressed his desire to paint a self-portrait for the next RA exhibition: 'I have made a study of the original which you know so well[,] I think the best drawing I have ever made. I shall do this in the best possible manner' (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 6). Holman Hunt replied on 31 October: 'I think the idea of doing your portrait a good one, because it is good practice, the best, and because a portrait of oneself, if like, always surprises people, and induces them to have theirs done. Nevertheless I would not advise you to exhibit it publicly, because amongst the successful men of the present day [...] it is taken as a sign of one's being without other employment; a fact much better not known' (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 66, ff. 17–19). It would appear that Stephens never got around to painting the self-portrait, but the drawing to which he refers in his letter has not been found.

16: Septimus Stephens (The Artist's Father) 1852–3

Oil on canvas, arched top, 52 x 38 cm.

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; thence to James Arthur Iggulden, 1931; by descent to Iggulden's son Michael, 1979; offered for sale at Sotheby's, London, 7 April 1981 (lot 281), unsold; location unknown.

Exhibited: 1854, RA (1330, titled 'Portrait').

Literature: Manson 1920, Plate 3.

Charles Aitken informed Holman Stephens on 10 December 1928 that the portrait had been restored by Mr Lee: 'The oil portrait of your grandfather was hopelessly [?]. [Lee] has pasted it over to prevent the paint dropping off further. This is all that can be done unless you wish [William] Morrell to reline it' (CSRM). See No. 12 for Holman's response.

The portrait may still be in the possession of the Iggulden family, although I have been unable to confirm this.

17: John Everett Millais 12 April 1853

Drawing.

Location unknown.

Literature: Bronkurst, *Hunt*, 2:43.

Made during one of the last meetings of the remaining PRB members in Millais's studio in Gower Street on 12 April 1853, during which they sketched portraits of each other to send as souvenirs to Woolner, then in Australia. Stephens wrote to Woolner about the gathering on 21 April, after the latter had received the sketches: 'I made an attempt at his [Millais's] most splendid head, but the failure was utter and in spite of all the tauntings he could pronounce, with proddings from Hunt, I viciously refused to proceed. You will I hope forgive me, when I add that I was very ill or so sick at heart from some bad news I had just received that any noise was welcome, but actual thought seemed almost madness. [...] However, Hunt, with his indefatigable affection for me leaned over my shoulder and altered it, so that it may be just recognisable for the handsome Johnny's head'; quoted in Amy Woolner, ed., *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1917), 58. D. G. Rossetti also informed William Bell Scott on 7 May 1853: 'On the 12th of April, the PRB all made portraits of each other, which have been forwarded to Woolner. Millais did Stephens – Hunt did Millais and myself – Stephens did Millais – I did Hunt and William [Rossetti] – and William did the whole lot of us in his own striking style'; *CDGR*, 1:256.

Decades later, Stephens reminisced about the occasion to John Guille Millais: ‘Millais fell to me to be drawn [...] Unhappily for me, I was so ill at that time that it was with the greatest difficulty I could drag myself to Gower Street; more than that, it was but the day before the entire ruin of my family, then long impending and long struggled against in vain, was consummated. I was utterly unable to continue the sketch I began. I gave it up, and Mr Holman Hunt, who had had D. G. Rossetti for his *vis-à-vis* and sitter, took my place and drew Millais’s head’; quoted in Millais, *Life and Letters*, 1:82.

Although this last account implies that the drawing was left unfinished and never sent, the previous two, written in 1853, suggest that it was begun by Stephens, aided by Hunt, then posted to Woolner along with the other portraits. What happened to it after this is unknown.

18: Portrait 1853

Location unknown.

Known from a letter from Stephens to Hunt, undated ‘Sunday’: ‘I should like to know if you think I might venture upon asking Millais to lend me twelve pounds, the price of the portrait I am doing, stating to him the means of repayment’ (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2). This note is undated, but ‘Winter 1853’ has been added in pencil by an unknown hand.

19: (with William Holman Hunt) *The Hireling Shepherd* 1853

Oil on canvas laid on panel, 30.5 x 46 cm.

The Makins Collection, Washington, DC.

Partially attributed to Stephens in Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:160–61, no. 79.

20 (with William Holman Hunt): *The Light of the World* 1853–4

Oil on canvas, arched top, 49.8 x 26.2 cm.

Manchester Art Gallery (1912.53).

Partially attributed to Stephens in Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:162–63, no. 80.

21: *Walter Howell Deverell on his Deathbed* 1854

Chalk on paper.

Location unknown.

Mentioned in several letters from Stephens to W. M. Rossetti. On 12 January 1894: ‘Only the other day I turned up from among my old drawings a very true portrait I made of him [Deverell] while he lay in bed and was found to die’ (ADC, Box 14, Folder 8). Then again to Rossetti on 5 December 1895: ‘I have got a life-size bust in chalk of Deverell which I drew while the dear fellow was on his death bed: I had no opportunity for finishing it before he died. [...] The portrait is painfully like’ (ADC, Box 14, Folder 9). Finally, on 16 December 1895: ‘I dare say neither you, nor any one, ever saw my portrait of Deverell, which is little more than an outline, of a life-size bust, never finished, and mainly undertaken in order that I might keep him company during part of his last illness, poor dear boy’ (ADC, Box 14, Folder 9).

22: *Dr Thomas Bramah Diplock* probably 1854

Location unknown.

A letter from Stephens to Hunt, 4–11 March 1855, mentions ‘The Surgeon, whose portrait I painted’, who made FGS an offer for a ‘little picture’ (probably No. 25) that he was painting at that time (WHHF, Folder 1, Box 2). The identity of this ‘Surgeon’ is revealed in a later letter from Stephens to Hunt, 14 November 1855: ‘Diplock the surgeon whom I mentioned as having made me the offer for the little picture has married, he and I are great friends. He, you will, I hope, like, a better hearted fellow does not exist, and he is not without living stuff in him, though enormously indolent, being without the necessity for exertion. A huge creation six feet two, with a handsome clear-skinned face’.

No. 22 may be one of the ‘four or five portraits’ which Stephens said he was working on in a letter to Hunt on 25 June 1854 (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2).

Diplock (1830–92) is notable for being the coroner after the death of Montague Druiitt, one of the suspects in the ‘Jack the Ripper’ murder case in 1888–9. He is frequently mentioned in Stephens’s correspondence in the CSR. Diplock’s aunt, known simply as Mrs Bramah, assisted

with the education of Annie Miller in 1854.

23: Portrait 1854

Location unknown.

Commission described in a letter from D. G. Rossetti to Stephens, undated (February 1854): 'I always forget [...] to mention something of which Miss [Margaretta] Deverell spoke to me, viz: a portrait which somebody wants, & Walter D[everell] was going to do before his death. It is to be got up on the strength of a daguerreotype & wild enthusiasm, the great original having been snatched from a desolated world. As I believe you have once or twice done things of this kind, I thought I would write to you, and if you like you could propose to Miss Deverell to undertake it. [...] I believe that portion of mankind most interested are willing to pay about £15 (at least I *think* this was it) for the memento of the too early lost'; *CDGR*, 1:325.

Stephens to Hunt, 4 August 1854: 'I am not able to give my whole time to it [his copies for Augustus Egg] on account of [the] portraits I mentioned in my last: one of these from a Daguerreotype I have finished and tho' extremely unsatisfactory as a work of Art has enraptured the Lady who gave me the commission, (Deverell was to have done it so you may perhaps have seen it,) and all her Friends who seem to look upon me as a kind of wizard to paint a portrait of one I never saw. She gave me also an order for his brother, whom I have just finished, and shall send home in a week or two [No. 20]. The price of the first had been agreed upon with Deverell at £15.15, this I adopted without anything being said on the subject, and on her asking me what she had to pay I stated the case. She spoke very civilly and gave a cheque for £18.18. [...] I dine with often and see the Lady above, who tells me your old master Rogers had some six or eight commissions from her' (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2).

The names of both the sitter and the woman who commissioned No. 23 are not given.

24: Portrait 1854

Location unknown.

See No. 23, letter from Stephens to Hunt, 4 August 1854, stating that Stephens painted a portrait of the brother of the sitter of No. 23, which he had 'just finished, and shall send him in a week or two'. The sitter's name is not given.

25: Mother and Child ca. 1854–6

Oil on canvas, arched top, unfinished, 47 x 64.1 cm.

Signed with monogram 'FGS' lower right.

Tate (N04634).

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; part of Holman's bequest to the Tate, 1932.

Exhibited: *The Pre-Raphaelites: A Loan Exhibition of their Paintings and Drawings* [...], Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, April–May 1948 (no. 117); *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1848–1948: A Centenary Exhibition*, Tate Gallery, London, Sept. 1948 – Sept. 1849; *The Pre-Raphaelites*, Tate Gallery, London, 1984 (no. 64); *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand and Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, USA, 2003–4 (no. 15).

Literature: Manson 1920, Plate 2; John Gere and Robin Ironside, *Pre-Raphaelite Painters* (London: Phaidon Press, 1948), 45; Anna Southall, 'Frederick George Stephens: Mother and Child', in *Completing the Picture: Materials and Techniques of Twenty-Six Paintings in the Tate Gallery*, ed. Stephen Hackney (London: Tate Publishing, 1982), 44–46; Leslie Parris, ed., *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Publishing, 1984), 127; Robert Wilkes, "'My quondam friend of nearly half our lives": Hunt's relationship with F. G. Stephens', *Pre-Raphaelite Society Review* 26, no. 3 (Autumn 2018), 30–47.

26: Charles Bridger 1855

Oil on canvas, unfinished, 12.8 x 11.5 cm approx.

Formerly Tate; location unknown.

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; part of Holman's bequest to the Tate, 1932; stolen while on loan to

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 21 February 1960, probably destroyed.

Letter from Stephens to Hunt, 14 November 1855: 'I have completed the head of a portrait of Bridger, which remains incomplete on account of his mysterious disappearance' (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2).

27: Untitled Landscape 1862–3(?)

Mentioned in a letter from Thomas Bramah Diplock, 31 August 1863, inviting Stephens to stay with the Diplocks: 'I hope you will get some painting weather for I am very desirous of seeing your last year's landscape finished – I hope you have got it with you' (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 59, ff. 117–18). Diplock's letter is addressed from Brighton, and he mentions in the same letter that he has 'a watercolor [sic] of Shoreham Harbour' (Shoreham-by-Sea, just along the coast from Brighton), suggesting that Stephens's landscape was painted in West Sussex.

28: Rebecca Clara Stephens ca. 1865

Watercolour and gouache with scraping and selectively applied glaze on paper, 40 x 34.1 cm. Signed with monograph 'FGS' lower right.

Collection of Dennis T. Lanigan.

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; the artist's widow Clara Stephens, 1907; by descent to their son, Holman Fred Stephens, 1915; thence to James Arthur Iggulden, 1931; his sale, Geering & Colyer, Ashford, Kent, 23 May 1979, lot 457; bt Jeremy Maas of the Maas Gallery, London; bt Michael Hasenclever of the Galerie Hasenclever, Munich, 4 July 1979; Sotheby's, New York, 24 February 1983, lot 181; Christie's, London, 1 December 1989, lot 1079; Christie's, London, 6 November 2005, lot 52; bt Dennis T. Lanigan.

Exhibited: *Beauty's Awakening: Drawings by the Pre-Raphaelites and their Contemporaries from the Lanigan Collection*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa and Leighton House, London, 2015–16 (no. 69).

Literature: Newall, Lanigan and Re, *Beauty's Awakening*, 166–67.

Listed in the 1916 inventory of 9 Hammersmith Terrace, page 100, as 'A Portrait of a Lady, wearing striped white dress, and peacock feathers in her hair. Water colour drawing by F. G. Stephens', valued at 10 shillings.

29: North Foreland undated

Location unknown.

Included in a list of 'Pictures belonging to Lt-Col. H. F. Stephens' on loan to the National Gallery of British Art, dated 27 February 1920: 'North Foreland. by F. G. Stephens'. It is possible that this painting is the *Mountainous Landscape* listed in the 1916 inventory (No. 31), although the landscape of North Foreland in Kent is coastal rather than mountainous.

30: Portrait of a Gentleman with a Long Flowing Beard undated

Location unknown.

Listed in the inventory of 9 Hammersmith Terrace after Clara Stephens's death, 1916, page 75, valued at £1. It is faintly possible that this painting is the same as No. 46, although the beard of the sitter in No. 46 is shorter.

31: A Mountainous Landscape undated

Location unknown.

Listed in the inventory of 9 Hammersmith Terrace, 1916, page 75, valued at 10 shillings.

32: Portrait of a Gentleman Seated in a Chair undated

Listed in the inventory of 9 Hammersmith Terrace, 1916, page 75, valued at £1.

The inventory does not state whether this is a drawing, a watercolour or a painting. It could be the same picture as No. 16, the portrait of Septimus Stephens who is depicted seated in a chair, although Septimus's name would probably have been included if so.

Miscellaneous works

33: Set of Gilded Drawings 1849–52

Materials and location unknown.

This project is outlined in a number of letters from Clarence Hopper (1817–66), an antiquary associated with the British Museum and the Camden Society, to Stephens, between 30 October 1849 and 2 January 1852 (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 71–87). The subject matter and intended purpose of the drawings is unclear, but Hopper mentions in two of the letters (4 January 1850, ff. 72–73; 20 April 1850, ff. 76–77) that Stephens was to incorporate gilding in them, which suggests they were copied from medieval illuminated manuscripts. The *PRB Journal*, 12 November 1849, records that Stephens was ‘occupied during the day making drawings from MSS. etc. at the Museum for which he is commissioned’; then on the 19th, ‘Stephens is still engaged during the day at the Museum’. The commission dragged on until 1852, and when Hopper eventually received the drawings, he was dissatisfied with some of them (2 January 1852, ff. 80–81).

34: Restoration of Frescoes by John Francis Rigaud at Trinity House, London 1850

In September 1850, Stephens assisted Hunt with the restoration of frescoes by John Francis Rigaud at Trinity House, London. Hunt gave an account of the project in *PR&PRB*, 1:228–29. A note to Stephens from an official at Trinity House, 10 September 1850, states: ‘I shall be glad if you can come to assist Mr Hunt with the Painting at the Trinity House tomorrow [11th] & Thursday [12th] as we want the matter finished so that the Scaffold can be struck. I have settled this with him so I shall be glad if your other Engagements enable you to come prepared to enter upon it early tomorrow’ (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 159).

35: Design for a Lithograph for Sheet Music 1852

Mentioned in a letter from J. Waller to Stephens, undated ‘Thursday night’ [October 1852]: ‘[I] am very much disappointed that you have not sent the sketch you cannot be aware of what importance it is to keep faith with publishers. I would much rather that you had sent the wood cut back, I could then either have done the best I could myself or could have got it done by some one else. [...] It was very particular that the publisher should have the drawing on Thursday as he was going to see the sketch before he went. [...] You know very well what a music title is and so will understand the kind of drawing that would be likely to [suit?] if your sketch is not well made out a clean tracing would much facilitate my drawing on stone [...] P.S. let the sketch be bold and very lightly coloured à la Brandard’ (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, ff. 164–65).

A second letter from Waller, 17 October 1852, expresses dissatisfaction: ‘I was much obliged to you for your sketch but am sorry to say it would not do[,] the position of the men being quite at variance with the laws of the game[,] neither did you keep up the character of the distant country in the landscape as shown in [the] woodcut, but I will explain more about it when I see you. I made another sketch myself which was approved of and have been busy lithographing it in the evening often [...] As soon as I have finished and got a proof you shall see it and although I have no doubt that the drawing is far inferior to yours you will see the style of thing they wanted’ (f. 166). It seems that Stephens’s design was never published.

36: Patrick Copland 1853

Location unknown.

A letter from Patrick Copland to Stephens, 21 May 1853, stating that he was too busy that morning to ‘sit to you’ (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 30), suggests the portrait might not have been executed.

37: Sketch for Augustus Egg 1854

Stephens is known to have produced several copies and oil sketches for Augustus Leopold Egg in the mid-1850s, but the only one which can be described in detail is mentioned in a letter from Stephens to Hunt, 4 August 1854:

‘I am now working for Egg, who having written to me to call on him, I did so shortly after writing to you, he then showed me a print of the picture he wished me to copy, not having the picture at home, and we agreed that I should copy it for £10 as a minimum. [T]his was my own proposal,

and he seemed rather surprised at the low figure, so agreed that he should give me this at least and more according to the extent which I carried the work. I felt extremely awkward in stating the price, not liking to lose the chance of tin; and feeling certain that I should be troublesome, I hit upon this particular sum thus. You had said he might or would require two sketches made for which he might or would give between £20 & £25, fancying this might be one of them I proposed the £10, but as yet I hear nothing of the other. You will wonder how I get on: at first I made a very careful outline greatly to his satisfaction, then painted some hands in the light, pretty well, but when I began a head (I believe of Gil Blas, or some such hero, for tho' I have had the picture before me at Kensington about eighteen days I have not the slightest idea of its subject) – in shadow, but being ignorant of the powers of slosh and naturally timid, in far too low a key. [Egg] came into the Room at the time and in evident bewilderment enquired, in a soft restrained voice, how I proposed to proceed with it. I muttered something about Bone Brown and wished myself at the Devil, expecting to be taken by the neck and sent down Campden Hill with a portion [illegible], impetus. [H]e held his breath a bit, but not quite successfully, for one or two [?] broke out, then sat down and gave me a good lesson in sloshy painting & I must do him the justice to say with perfect good temper. We get on better now, he tells me what I require to know and I fancy he is generally satisfied with my work, at least I fancy so by his only finding fault with trifles and being very civil' (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2).

In an earlier letter to Hunt, 25 June 1854, Stephens wrote: 'Egg has written to me to go and make the sketch we spoke of before. I am going to see the pictures with a view to commencing at once at the end of this week'. Whether the sketch referred here is the same as above, is uncertain.

38: Oil Sketch 1854

Stephens to Hunt, 1854: 'As soon as I get the sketch of colour done I will bring it over, I want your opinion as to the objection to a square canvas' (WHHF, Box 1, Folder 2). This may refer to *Mother and Child* (No. 25).

39: Margaretta Deverell 1856

Location unknown.

Mentioned as a possibility in a letter from Margaretta Deverell (1829–1914), the eldest sister of Walter Howell Deverell, to Stephens, 4 March 1856: 'I have been very unwell indeed lately, but will endeavour to sit to you on Monday [10th], and will be with you in the afternoon about two. We shall look forward with pleasure to the prospect of some boating excursions. [...] I fear you will think I am looking too ill for your picture, I have had a very unhappy visit having lost an Aunt & other suddenly whilst on my stay at her house' (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 57, ff. 12–13).

This may relate to Stephens's *Mother and Child* (No. 25, discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis), with Margaretta being a possible model for the mother figure.

40: Drawing for William Allingham 1856

Letter from William Allingham to Stephens, 28 February 1856: 'I hope you will not forget the promised drawing, – both for the pleasure I expect from its intrinsic merits & the sweet flattery of its "illustration". I shall jealously remember to long for it' (FGSP, MS. Don. e. 81, ff. 39–40).

The wording of this suggests that the drawing was illustrating one of Allingham's poems. However, it is not known if Stephens actually executed the illustration.

41: Copy of a Drawing by Dante Gabriel Rossetti 1857

Mentioned in two letters from Rossetti to Stephens. In late May 1857: 'I am much wanting that drawing [of Rossetti's which belonged to Stephens] – *Dice-playing* – which is at Thurston Thompson's, 7 Gordon Terrace, Kensington. [...] Would you oblige me by going, as owner, & taking it away. If not yet photographed, [William] Morris must get him to do it in a month's time, after Russell Place exhibition, as it ought to be with me now *at once* to get it properly framed. [...] I am owing you £5 for that copy, which I hope to let you have soon. I ought to get the drawing tomorrow if possible' (CDGR, 2:182–83). The 'Dice-playing' drawing was *Hesterna Rosa*, which Rossetti had presented to Stephens in 1853 (see Appendix 2, No. 9).

Rossetti wrote to Stephens about the matter again, apparently in July or August 1857: '... to you till I had finished the drawing, which however would not I am sure take many days. I find it is not

easy for a second artist to understand so completely the use of colours by a first that No. 1 can successfully finish the work of No. 2 in a short time – at least the 2 have been some time working together in this way & have got into the knack. Both original & copy you will find (if willing to do this) leaning against wall in one corner of my study. This idea has only struck me at the last moment of my stay in town or I would have come to you about it. On finishing eventually my No. 1, I should pay you a 2nd £5, (my original stipulation,) & let this proposed £5 stand for copy No. 2.’ (*CDGR*, 2:193–94).

As Fredeman notes, the context of the second letter is unclear: ‘From the earlier letter [...] it appears that [Rossetti] had commissioned [Stephens] to make two copies of one of his works for which he had agreed to pay him £5 each, but this is only to hazard a guess’. The first letter would imply that the drawing which Stephens was to copy was *Hesterna Rosa*.

42: Sketch of Stephens’s Bedroom ca. 1860

Sketch included in a letter to Rebecca Clara Dalton, undated but probably from May or June 1860, six years before their marriage; CSRM, 2015.47.91.49.

43: Frame for the Engraving of Hunt’s *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* ca. 1867

Oak, carved and gilded, 84.8 x 108.6 cm.

Private collection.

Sold at Christie’s, London, 4 May 2007.

Hunt to John Lucas Tupper, 18 December 1867, in Coombs, *A Pre-Raphaelite Friendship*, 80–81: ‘The frame is to my taste the best as well as the simplest – altho’ the very elaborate one, adapted from the frame of the picture by Stephens really looks well much beyond my expectation, for it seemed it must be too heavy for the subject as given in the print without colour’.

I am grateful to Judith Bronkhurst for bringing this to my attention (email to the author, 31 May 2019).

44: Copies of Illuminations from Christine de Pisan 1870s?

Known from a draft of a letter which Stephens wrote to William Morris, dated 3 January 1880, FGSP, MS. Don. d. 118, ff. 65–66. Morris commissioned Stephens to make ‘copies from illuminations in the British Museum’, specifically from the manuscript of the works of Christine de Pisan. Stephens had previous experience of copying manuscripts in the British Museum, as early as 1849. It is not known when exactly Morris commissioned this, but he advanced £12 to Stephens for the drawings. Stephens’s letter nervously excuses his long delay in completing the copies: ‘Not long after [receiving the commission] I was entangled in literary labour’.

45: (Possibly by Stephens) Sketch of a Woman (Clara Stephens?) Wearing a Day Cap undated
Pencil on paper.

Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (FGS.10).

The sitter of this small, unsigned sketch bears a close resemblance to Clara Stephens in her old age, particularly the mouth and the round shape of the face. If it is her, then this would date the drawing to the 1890s or slightly later.

46: (Attributed to Stephens) William Allingham(?) undated

Oil on canvas, 39.1 x 31.4 cm.

Harvard Art Museums (1943.204).

Provenance: E. Carlsberg. [Jacques Furst, New York] sold January 1939; bt Grenville L. Winthrop, January 1939; part of the Grenville L. Winthrop bequest to the Fogg Museum, 1943. Note from Harvard Art Museums website: ‘It is unclear from documentation if Furst actually owned the painting or sold it for Carlsberg’.

Literature: *Paintings and Drawings of the Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1946), no. 94.

Unlikely to be by Stephens as it does not fit his Pre-Raphaelite style and the provenance is insubstantial. Although Allingham has been proposed as the sitter, the man depicted in this portrait does not resemble him.

Appendix 2: Pre-Raphaelite Pictures in Stephens's Collection

Following the death of Clara Stephens on 25 November 1915, Christie, Manson and Woods surveyed the contents of 9 Hammersmith Terrace. The inventory of books, prints, pictures, drawings, furniture, china and decorative objects is now in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum. It is typewritten and runs to approximately 100 pages, dated 22 January 1916 on the final page. The entire collection was valued at £2,283 15s 0d. Fourteen of these works are now in the Tate.

By PRB members

1

James Collinson, *Study of the Head of an Old Woman*, undated. Pencil and white chalk on tinted paper, 30.5 x 26.7 cm. Private collection; sold at Christie's, 29 October 1991 (lot 23). Inscribed 'J. Collinson to his PR Brother, F. G. Stephens'. Manson 1920, Plate 19.

2

William Holman Hunt, *F. G. Stephens*, 1846–7. Oil on panel, 20.3 x 17.5 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

Inscribed with monograms 'WHH' and 'FGS'.

Note formerly on verso in Stephens's hand: 'Feb. 18. 1872. This [portra]it of myself was painted in Lo[n]don in 184[6] and 1847 [by] W. Holman Hunt and on my 28th bi[rth]day, given to my mother, Dorothy Mary St[ephe]ns; shortly before her death, Nov. 14 1871 [...] was bequeathed by her to my son Holma[n] [...], to whom it now belongs. Frederic G. Stephens'; see Bronkhurst, *Hunt*, 1:113.

3

William Holman Hunt, *Etching for the 'Germ' ('My Beautiful Lady' and 'Of My Lady in Death')*, 1850. Etching, 20.3 x 12.1 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

Inscribed 'To his Dear PRB FG Stephens – W Holman Hunt'.

4

John Everett Millais, *Study for 'Christ in the House of His Parents'*, ca. 1849. Pencil on paper, 19 x 33.7 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

5

John Everett Millais, *F. G. Stephens*, 1853. Pencil on paper, 21.6 x 15.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery. Presented by Holman Stephens, 1929.

6

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Anniversary of the Death of Beatrice (Dante Drawing an Angel)*, 1849. Pencil on paper, 37.8 x 33 cm. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Inscribed on verso: 'Tracing apparently by D. G. Rossetti from a drawing by himself which he gave to J. E. Millais, and the latter exhibited at the Burlington Club, 1883'. This is a tracing of a drawing by Rossetti from 1849 now in Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (1904P485).

7

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sketches of Figures*, ca. 1849. Glasgow Art Museums.

Inscribed on verso: 'These sketches were made by D. G. Rossetti upon paper he used while I was teaching him perspective. F. G. Stephens'.

8

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Taurello's First Sight of Fortune*, 1849. Pen and ink on paper, 27.9 x 27.9 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

Inscribed 'Frederic G. Stephens – from his P-R Brother / Dante G. Rossetti'.

9

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Hesterna Rosa*, 1853. Pen and ink on paper, 19 x 23.5 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

Inscribed 'Composed 1850, drawn, and given to his PR Brother Frederic G- Stephens, 1853'.

10

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Elizabeth Siddall in a Chair*, undated. Pencil on paper, 26 x 18.4 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

Note on verso by William Michael Rossetti: 'After DGR's death [in 1882] this drawing was selected as a memento by Christina Georgina Rossetti. Upon her death (Dec. 1894) it came to Wm. Michael Rossetti who presents it to his never failing Friend of 47 years' standing, Frederic George Stephens. Feb/95'; Duval, 'Stephens', 340.

11

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Elizabeth Siddall Plaiting her Hair*, undated. Pencil on paper, 17.1 x 12.7 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

12

Inventory description: 'A number of sketches by F. G. Stephens and others – in a portfolio'. Further details of these drawings are not known.

By Other Pre-Raphaelite Artists**13**

George Price Boyce, *Sunset*, undated. Location unknown.

14

George Price Boyce, *View in the Lledr Valley, after Sunset*, undated. Location unknown.

Also recorded in a list of 'Pictures belonging to Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens' on loan to the National Gallery of British Art, dated 27 February 1920, Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (27.2.1920).

15

George Price Boyce, *Dust Heap near the Babel Nasr, Cairo*, 1862. Watercolour, 13.4 x 18 cm. Location unknown. Signed 'G. P. Boyce '62'. Manson 1920, Plate 23.

16

Ford Madox Brown, *Study of F. G. Stephens for 'Jesus Washing Peter's Feet'*, 1852. Pencil on paper, 29.2 x 34.3 cm. Tate.

17

Ford Madox Brown, *The Stages of Cruelty*, ca. 1856. Watercolour on paper, 14.3 x 12.1 cm. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932.

A letter from F. G. Stephens to Ford Madox Hueffer, 11 January 1897, National Art Library, MS/1995/14/103/25, states that this watercolour and No. 16 specifically belonged to Clara Stephens, who was 'willing to lend them to the forthcoming exhibition at the Grafton Gallery if you think they are important enough for the occasion, which I do not, and the gallery will insure them at, say, 10 guineas each. At the same time my wife, like myself, would rather these sketches were not required'.

18

Ford Madox Brown, *Holman 'Holly' Fred Stephens*, 1869. Red, black and white chalks on paper, circular, 29.8 cm in diameter. Private collection. See Bennett, *Brown*, 2:424, no. B107.

19–21

Three sketches by Edward Burne-Jones, housed in one frame and inscribed 'F. G. S., from E. B. J., London, MDCCCLXXXVII'. Tate. Bequeathed by Holman Stephens, 1932. Separated into three

accession numbers:

N04637: *Head and Hand of a Woman*, undated. Pencil on paper, 22.5 x 16.5 cm.

N04638: *Study of the Head and Shoulders of a Woman for 'The Passing of Venus'*, ca. 1875. Pencil, chalk and watercolour on paper, 25.1 x 17.2 cm.

N04639: *Head and Shoulders, Front View*, undated. Pencil and chalk on paper, 20.3 x 14.3 cm.

22

Walter Howell Deverell, *Two Sketches, in Pencil*.

The inventory misspells artist's name 'Walter R. Deverell'; Deverell's father was named Walter Ruding Deverell, and he died in 1853, but it is unlikely that Stephens would have owned drawings by him. This is probably the pencil sketch of the heads of two women (thought to be Margaretta and Maria Deverell) in Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery (1920P711), date 9 May 1853, which bears an inscription in Stephens's hand: 'by Walter Howell Deverell / given me by his Sisters / Feb. 1854 / F. G. S.'. On the verso of the same sheet are two sketches of sheep.

23

Walter Howell Deverell, *Claude Duval and the Lady*, ca. 1850. Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery. Deverell's design of 'Claude du Val dancing with a lady of quality after attacking her carriage (in the possession of Stephens)' is recorded in *PRBJ*, 72 (October 1850).

24

Arthur Hughes, *Holman Fred Stephens as a Child, Standing in a Garden*, signed and dated 1875. Oil on canvas laid on panel, 53.4 x 31.8 cm.

Provenance: F. G. Stephens; Clara Stephens; Holman Stephens; thence to James Arthur Iggulden; his sale, Geering & Colyer, Ashford, Kent, 23 May 1979; bt. private buyer. Location unknown.

25

John William Inchbold, *Ramparts of Old Algiers*, undated. Location unknown.

26

Frederick Sandys, *A Nightmare (Caricature of 'Sir Isumbras at the Ford')*, 1857. Lithograph, 35 x 50.2 cm. Manson 1920, Plate 13.

27

William Bell Scott, *Rossetti's Wombat Seated in his Master's Lap*, 1871. Pencil on paper, 17.8 x 11.1 cm.

Tate. Bequeathed by HFS, 1932.

The 1916 inventory misidentifies the animal as a tom cat.

28

Henry Wallis, *A Persian Vase*, undated. Location unknown.

Notable additions

29

Unknown artist, *F. G. Stephens as a Boy*, 1839.

Recorded in a list of 'Pictures belonging to Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens' on loan to the National Gallery of British Art, dated 27 February 1920, Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (27.2.1920).

30

Elizabeth Heaphy Murray, *Septimus Stephens*, 1841. Watercolour and pen and wash, oval. 21 x 15.2 cm.

Note on verso in F. G. Stephens's handwriting explains that the sitter died in 1860 and was from Preston, Lancs. Sold by Caroline Stroud in the 1980s; present location unknown. See Duval, 'Stephens', 341.

Also recorded in a list of 'Pictures belonging to Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens' on loan to the National Gallery of British Art, dated 27 February 1920, Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (27.2.1920): 'Septimus Stephens by Eliz. Heapley [sic]'.

31

Benjamin Rowlandson Faulkner, *Septimus Stephens*, undated.

Recorded in a list of 'Pictures belonging to Lt.-Col. H. F. Stephens' on loan to the National Gallery of British Art, dated 27 February 1920, Colonel Stephens Railway Museum (27.2.1920).

32

Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *Rebecca Clara Stephens*, 1872. Oil on mahogany panel, 28.6 x 40.6 cm.

Location unknown.

Signed 'L. Alma-Tadema, Op. CXXII'. The painting was badly damaged after the Thames flooding in 1928. Manson 1920, Plate 7.

33

Samuel Palmer, *The Bright Cloud*, undated. Sepia.

Note from 'A.H.P.' to Stephens, undated: 'I hope that from among these sketches you may be able to pick out something you like. The Shoreham period is represented especially, by the "Bright Cloud" of which drawing you have formerly written. [...] I have added to the others the first conception of *The Skylark* [No. 34]'; FGSP, MS. Don. e. 71, f. 81. This letter suggests that Nos. 33–37 came directly from the Palmer family.

34

Samuel Palmer, *The Skylark*, undated. Sepia.

35

Samuel Palmer, *Cattle under a Tree*, undated. Sepia.

36

Samuel Palmer, *The Rock Slip near Boscastle*, undated. Gouache and coloured chalks on paper, 24.1 x 27 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

37

Samuel Palmer, *Margate: and four sketches in chalk and sepia*. Undated.

38

Sketch of F. G. Stephens by an unknown artist, late 1840s?

Known from a photograph in the Colonel Stephens Railway Museum. A note accompanying the photograph describes the original as a pencil sketch, measuring 13 x 17 inches, which was found behind the mount of a framed photograph showing an army regiment in 1913; 'Sketch may be of FG Stephens as a young man by Holman Hunt'. I have shown the photograph of the drawing to Judith Bronkhurst, who agreed that Stephens was the sitter but that the artist is unlikely to have been Hunt (correspondence with the author, 30 November 2018). The original drawing is still unlocated.

In circles great,² and there the avenues pac'd out
 Dug up the [grass?], deepen'd all the forest
 And {like} a secret sin {did hide} away,
 { as } { hid all }
 With demoniac service aided. 40
 Then the column
 I laid down at became a tree, the wild
 Lone moor was forest; brambles and thick grass
 Were round, and at my feet a stream-bed, nigh
 Dry by summer, gaped, and knotted, long 45

[Fragment ends here]

2. Arthur

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.5; 2 sheets, 4 sides; composed 1849.

A voice, a voice, a large full voice,
 Among the leaves went spreading far;
 Far out it spread among the leaves,
 'Gawaine Fair Coz. Gawaine'³ and soon
 An armêd foot upon the stones, 5
 Crashing and breaking o'er the twigs,
 Gave token of the wearer's presence.
 Stretching an arm before him
 To force an oak's low branches back,
 Full on my view the warrior came 10
 Clad all in mail and over that a white Garment,
 White, without a blazon, all unstained,
 And yet he seemed a king, a King, in form
 And haughty presence, all his face was bare,
 Free o'er his shoulders fell his cowl of mail, 15
 From off the Bascinet thrown,
 Straight Brows he had, and little space between,
 And 'undernethe ther glowen eyês twey'
 Quick, sad and little stern, yet in the lips
 A firmness sat, was not to be cast down, 20
 Kindly lookêd, Gentle seemed, yet in Battle dred,
 From his chin, broad, down fell his beard,
 Short, curled, dark brown.
 Full of thought he seemed, perplexed,
 And then his voice sent forth again, 25
 And shouted: another deep in the forest's bosom
 Came faint in answer soon,
 And nearer coming, louder grew
 To call the hills unto each other
 Deep-voiced – as poets swore, 30
 During a storm – then another knight
 Bounding and leaping down the watercourse

² The legend that Merlin created Stonehenge using stones from Mount Killarus in Ireland was first told in Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century chronicle *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*).

³ 'Coz': an archaic word for 'cousin'. Sir Gawain was King Arthur's nephew and one of the Knights of the Round Table.

Came on _____
 Stayed before the other seated,
 Bending slightly as to a good superior, 35
 Answered, short-breathed, the rapid question,
 ‘Hast thou found a path, Gawaine,’ –
 ‘My liege, there is none. I,
 Stretching to the westward trode a mile,
 And found nought but thickets, and a running stream. 40
 If nothing chances, we must follow that,
 I no farther went for that I feared to lose
 My prince’s voice – but here is Castor,⁴
 Thy faithful hound’ – so in great circles,
 Running with nose bent down 45
 On came a noble hound.
 ‘He tracks some footstep,’ quoth the King,
 (For king he was,) in voice low sudden sunk.
 Syr Gawaine drew his sword, –
 Slanting along the channel, straight at my covert, 50
 Stayed at the bushes, baying stood the Hound.
 ‘Come forth if thou art good,’ said then the King,
 ‘The Dog shall harm thee not.’
 Then upwards I arose, and forward went,
 To meet them. – The King unto Syr Gawaine 55
 Made a sign, and forth he stepped with greeting fair.
 ‘Thou seemst a minstrel, and a singer loud
 At Tournaments, of Battles; or of Gentle Deeds
 A fair Recorder – say if thou art such
 And what thy purpose here and whither bound.’ 60
 ‘I am a Breton, a Minstrel and a Singer
 Journeying to the Ships that go to Gaul
 With Arthur, the great King,
 And all his fair arraie,⁵
 To conquer the olden Realm, newfound, – 65
 Knowing the Weald that stretches here athwart the land
 Having toiled the last day through,
 Fatigued I slept at the tree’s base,⁶
 Until aroused by footsteps and a voice aloud calling.’
 ‘Knowest thou the Forest here?’ 70
 _____ outspake the King.
 ‘Guide us unto Sandwich, and thou shalt
 As a minstrel go with me into far [Guidance?],
 One of mine own Household, for I am Arthur,
 He of whom thou spakest.’ 75
 Awed by the name, I bowed, and passed before, –
 Silent until the sun had [chimed?] high
 Up towards the noon, – we forwards paced.
 ‘Thou art a singer’ quote Syr Gawaine,
 ‘Canst thou not tell us of some Castle or a Hall 80
 Where we might rest awhile,

⁴ King Arthur’s hound was traditionally named Cavall or Cafall in the Matter of Britain. There is a minor knight named Sir Castor in Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, Book 12, Chapter 4, the nephew of King Pelles. One of the stars in the Gemini constellation is named Castor, after the twin brothers Castor and Pollux who were the sons of Leda.

⁵ ‘Arraie’: archaic spelling of ‘array’.

⁶ See No. 1, ll. 41–42, in which the druidic monolith beneath which the narrator falls asleep is transformed into a tree in his dream.

And hear thy voice for well we love
 The Song of War, or the light virelai,⁷
 Or canst thou not the way relieve
 With Legends of this mystic land 85
 So Rich in Fable, Tale, or High Romance,
 Or point some Bower or Arbour near
 Where we might stay and Hear' —
 'Here is one for the purpose,' answered I,
 And stopt aside and drew a thicket screen away 90
 Showing a Cave's Entrance. They followed
 And Both stooping entered.
 It was a Cave, forgotten long ago,
 Passed from men's thoughts
 Become a Legend gray. 95
 It was said a fallen Runic King,
 After a battle lost, had halted here,
 And here been slain by vulgar hands
 But gentler came soon after and buried him,
 All in his armour Bronzen, 100
 Broken by the blows of his foul slayers,
 And by him laid the spear, and slew a dog,
 Laid him at the Cave's mouth
 And o'er him Rolled a stone, carvèd a Rhyme
 Rude of Death, — and his High fame. 105
 The Rhyme was worn. The Stone was moved away,
 Rifled the Tomb and all its Riches gone
 But still the Harp held it,
 And told in mournful metre of his grave and Glory
 By vulgar hands laid low. 110

[Fragment ends here]

3. Arthur

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.6; 1 sheet, 2 sides; composed 1849. Variant of No. 2, ll. 1–51.

A voice, a voice, a large full voice,
 Among the leaves went spreading far,
 Far it spread among the leaves.
 'Gawaine Fair Coz Gawaine,'
 And soon an armèd foot upon the stones, 5
 Clashing and breaking o'er the twigs,
 Gave token of the caller's presence;
 Stretching an arm before him,
 To force an oak's low branches back,
 Full on my view the warrior came; 10
 Clad all in mail over that a white garment,
 White, without a blazon, all unstained,
 And yet he seemed a king, a king in form
 And haughty presence, his face was bare,
 From o'er his shoulders fell the hood of mail, 15
 From off his bascinet through;

⁷ 'Virelai': a form of medieval French verse together with the ballade and rondeau.

Straight brows he had, and little space between,
 And 'undernethe ther glowen eyês twey'
 Quick, sad, and little stern,
 Yet in the lip firmness sat, not to be cast down 20
 Kindly lookêd, youth seemed, yet in battle died,
 From his chin, broad, down fell his beard,
 Short, curled, dark brown.
 Full of thought he seemed, perplexed,
 And then his voice sent forth again 25
 And shouted, and then another deep in the forest's bosom
 Came faint in answer
 But swiftly, nearing, louder grew,
 To call the hills unto each other,
 Deep voiced, as poets sware, 30
 During a storm, – and then another knight
 Bounding and leaping down the watercourse
 Came swift (so comes the rushing stream)
 Stayed before the other seated,
 Bending slightly, as to a good superior 35
 Answered swift the rapid question,
 'Hast thou found a path Gawaine.'
 'My liege, there is none, I,
 Stretching to the westward trode a mile
 And found nought but thickets and a running stream 40
 If nothing chances we must follow that,
 I no farther went for that I feared to lose
 My prince's voice; but here is Castor,
 Thy faithful hound' – so in great circles
 Running; with nose bent down, 45
 On came a noble dog,
 ('He tracks some footstep,' quoth the King,
 For king he was, in voice low sudden sunk,
 Syr Gawaine drew his sword,)
 Slanting along the channel, straight at my covert, 50
 [?] at the bushes, baying stood the Hound.

4. Untitled (Fourth Fragment of 'Arthur')

MS: FGSP, MS. Don. e. 58, f. 23; 1 side, written on the reverse of a letter to James Buchanan, 23 July 1849.

Now the Month was Gone, and all the succours,
 Tributary Kings, had join'd the mighty Host.
 We went into the Barks, and raising Sail
 Sped over Sea untill upon our
 Brother Land, Brittany. For then did Arthur 5
 Hold the great wide realms that stretch part Land and
 Partly Sea; from Western Mona unto Maine,⁸
 Landing upon the Shore, low land spread out;
 The King of all the Thousands there that march
 This Host, to Every Knight his Charge and Rule 10

⁸ 'Mona': an ancient poetic name for Môn, the island of Anglesey off the north coast of Wales (i.e. in the west of Britain). Maine was one of the historical provinces of France, now part of the departments of Sarthe and Mayenne.

Did Give, dividing all with Syr Banier.⁹
 Went the van, to Take upon West Gavronne¹⁰
 His Post. Syr Banier was a Knight train'd
 Young in War, with Battle Passed to Age
 Shrewd, Wise and Valiant, Keeping the Sword 15
 For Act, not Threat, A Man of Patient thought
 That [never?] laid down the Shield; He led the Hosts
 – All through the curthal Land of Gaul Syr Bore¹¹
 Did [lead?] a Thousand Bearers of the Mace
 And axe two-edged that Breaks the Mail and 20
 [Strucketh?] off the Limb,
 – A Thousand Danish Axes.

And many more with other Knights
 Are gone, and Arthur with his peers,
 The chosen of the House rode on to Paris, 25
 There in Notre Dame, the Mother Church
 To riveran for truth to hold the land
 He sought to conquer in by a blessing
 On his arms for love of Christ.

[Fragment ends here]

5. 'In the cave underground'

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.4; 1 sheet, 2 sides; composed 1849(?). The reference to the cave suggests that this fragment follows on from No. 2, which ends with a description of the dead warrior king entombed in the cave, and a 'Rhyme' telling of his fate carved into the stone which had been worn away: 'But still the Harp held it, / And told in mournful metre of his grave and Glory / By vulgar hands laid low'. Perhaps this fragment is intended to be the 'mournful metre'.

In the cave underground
 My troops are found.
 But so muffled and sad they pass,
 That the miner's holla!
 Seems almost , alas!

In the wizard's chamber,
 Each word of fear
 I trembling and hushed repeat
 Till the fiends
 When I crouch at the wizard's feet.

⁹ Sir Banier appears in Sir Walter Scott's narrative poem *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813), Canto 2, Part XIII: 'Why should I tell of numbers more? / Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore'. In a footnote to his *Poetic Works* (1848), vol. 11, p. 63, Scott cites 'The Marriage of Sir Gawaine', an English ballad (Child 31) which also mentions Sir Banier.

¹⁰ Possibly a misspelling of 'Garonne', a river in southwest France.

¹¹ See Scott's *Bridal of Triermain* in note 9. Sir Bore is another knight mentioned in the 'Marriage of Sir Gawaine' ballad: 'Sir Lancelott and Sir Steven bold / They rode with them that day, / [...] Soe did Sir Banier and Sir Bore, Sir Garrett with them soe gay'.

1

Antiphonos, Echo King!¹²
 Here I stand; my troops a-ring;
 In the woods I have my dwelling;
 Sound a horn, – my [?] repeat,
 Upon a horn the notes retelling.

2

From the quarry deep
 To the hill side steep
 Where the pines are standing a-row
 At one.
 From hill to hill they go.

You nere see them go past
 But in the mountains at last
 Red-deer start in fear
 And started look round
 For the Hunters my servants bring near

or

You nere see them go past
 But in the mountains at last
 The startled deer look up
 As the sound fills the vale
 As water filleth a cup.

Unto the river's sandy bar
 My servants

[Fragment ends here]

6. To a Cast from the Head of Keats

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.2; 1 sheet, 1 side; composed ca. 1849–50. At the bottom of the sheet are a number of sums written by FGS in pen and pencil, while on the verso are further pencilled lists of numbers beside names including 'Castle', 'Hopper' and 'Tupper', together with 'July' (no date).

Gazing upon thine eyes although our own
 So full of Tears, meets no return, no beam
 To tell of Life can pass between. Short stream
 The cavern swallowed soon. Thy kindest tone
 Words 'A Thing of beauty is a joy for ever' 5
 Thus shall be thy life and thou for ever
 Living, shalt fill deep hearts like ours, who thus
 As we are, sitting round thy pleasant face
 And we have for thy glory done good things
 Have bowed before Thee and our Hearts always 10
 Are raised to tears not for thy fate. That
 Thou smilest away with eye benignant.

¹² In Greek mythology, Antiphonus was one of the many sons of Priam, the last king of Troy. However, the Greek word ἀντίφωνος (antíphōnos) is defined as an adjective 'sounding in answer, concordant, as in the octave'.

7. A Burial place for me

MS: Library of the South African National Gallery; 1 sheet, 1 side, fair copy, signed 'F.G.S.'; composed ca. 1849–50; No. 9 inscribed on verso.

A boy, – I said
 Bearing the vase of life above my head:
 'Lay me upon the hill whose top
 Gazes above the city's dim turmoil,
 That I may look on those I love, 5
 And some that climb may hold discourse with me.'

A man, – I say:
 'Hide me within some valley, shy, afar,
 That none may see the grave of one 10
 Who, with the strong right arm, declined the war;
 Let slip the vase before his feet,
 And sank, a weed, scorn of the garden-ground.'

I am: I was:—
 Which now belongs to me – Being, or Been? 15
 The silence of the shadows stretched afar,
 Because the sun is low? or darkness brief
 A little cloud before the moon?

8. Draft of 'Oh! weary falls the lapsing time'

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.10; 1 sheet, 1 side; draft of No. 9.

Oh, weary falls the lapsing time
 Oh, weary comes the waking day,
 Ah, sadly swerve the shadows round
 {From} tall trees thrown and {grassed} mound.
 { By } { grassy }

Most sadly falls this life on me
 With noble purpose unwrought out
~~The steeled soul rusteth thro' the day~~
 My life it flitteth fast away.

Like shadows thrown from haughty trees
 My soul its purpose spreadeth out
 And turns and wavers, left to right
 Will the meeting shadows e're make night?

Not to-day, not to-morrow,
 Nor the day which is to follow
 Shall my Lover come.
 I alone am sitting.
 Sorrow. Sorrow.

Her face was toward me and I saw the
 splendid gracious curvings of her throat, and
 her clear, kind, gray eyes that said 'No' [?]
 the lips uttered it, a cold heart seemed to come upon
 me and I felt that in all the aftertime that I should
 be alone.

13. 'This boke I bot for my Gaie ese'

MS: CSRM, 2015.47.96.11; 1 sheet, 1 side.

This boke I bot for my Gaie ese,
 On Summer daies, neth waving trees
 Or in Frozen Winter's darken'd time
 To Study its ill-forgotten rhyme
 These it Doth soe fairely tell, of
 Love, & Justice, Pride & Ruth,
 Brighte Honour and Knightly Truth.

Appendix 4: ‘The Reflection in Van Eyck’s Mirror’ by F. G. Stephens

Possibly written in the spring of 1850, owing to a reference in *PRBJ*, 2 December 1850: ‘A tale of a mediaeval musician (title forgotten) which [Stephens] wrote in the Spring’. Stephens might originally have intended to publish the tale in the *Germ*. No manuscript survives. First published in *Crayon* 3, no. 8 (August 1856), pp. 236–39. Originally titled ‘The Reflection in the Mirror’, but Stephens changed this at W. M. Rossetti’s suggestion ‘as better expressing the artistic subject of the tale’; Stephens to John Durand, 27 June 1856, JDP. The dedication which opens the tale was sent to Durand in the same letter, but the identity of ‘J. Y.’ is a mystery; it may be Holman Hunt, who had come to Stephens’s financial aid in 1854.

[Dedication:]

June 26th, 1856

In acknowledgement of a most noble and generous action, performed in a time of great trouble; I dedicate this Tale, with the utmost gratitude and affection, to my dear J. Y.¹³

About the year 1450, there lived at Venloo, in Limburg, a poor woman whose husband had been a carver in wood, much employed by the canons of Bruges. They, after his death, gave the widow a small office attached to the cathedral of the first named town; there she dwelt with her only child, a son, sickly and poor in constitution, slightly deformed in body, and in youth scarcely able to walk.¹⁴ The utmost eking out of the poor widow’s means would not allow her to obtain for the boy, other education than was given in the school of the town, founded by the good Earl Peter of Flanders. This was in fact, more of a singing school than anything else; music was taught, the art of playing on all instruments, the Viol, the Lute, the Regal and Rote – but principally such as were used in the services of the church; and the scholars mostly supplied the numerous choirs then abounding in the country.

Right proud were the burghers of Venloo of their famous singing school, and frequent were the visits they paid to hear the practice of the scholars, amongst whom the natural gifts of the widow’s son early distinguished him. He gained notice from these burghers well to do in the world; they and their wives meeting the young Pierre in the streets, would search the almonières hanging at their girdles, for coin to give the poor boy in pity, as they saw him clutch the walls for support. The poverty of his mother hindered her from dressing him as every woman desires her child to be, even in preference to herself. Yet she loved him well; and the thoughts of the ladies, who, as I said before, would search their purses for coin, accounted for this when they reached and came to pass him, turning, though slightly: (as some did, the gentle ones, not wishing to pain even him; others do so boldly, enough conscious of the intention of charity) – I say that, when they came to see his face, they found it very tender and lovely; not wasted, though pale; with grey sad eyes, clear and humble, yet when aroused vivacious and penetrating. He had a long girlish face, such as we see in old Florentine portraits, a short, full-lipped, generous-meaning mouth, round chin, and dark hair; and truly his soul, which God taught the ladies to read in his face, was wise and generous, and gentle. To him there seemed always a music about the world, a faint, strange undertone, sometimes of sadness, but mostly of joy; so his eyes got the under-dreaming, and the habit of thought caused the shadow within them, and this sweet sounding of music set the smile about his mouth, and an earnestly loving look in his whole face. Always a dreamer, and weak in health, he did not join the pastimes of other scholars, but sought mostly, for loneliness’s sake, the great vacant space between the roof and ceiling of the cathedral, and would sit amongst the immense stones looking at their joints, wondering where they came through and were seen in the church: above all this was his favourite spot to hear the wind rambling over these stones, or to be up in the belfry when the storms came over the level country into the spire, making harp-strings of the long ropes.

Thus Pierre’s life went many years till he was grown a young man of eighteen. Ever a dreamer, he was pure from contact with the baseness of the world, and happy that way; but time brings changes from all men, and often vital ones arise from our most trifling habits. He had gone up into the spire spoken of, one day during a storm, ascending to where the great bells swung, and while

¹³ FGS to John Durand, 27 June 1856: ‘You will greatly oblige me [...] by prefixing the dedication, as on the next page, which I regret I omitted [sic] to send before’.

¹⁴ Probably autobiographical, given FGS’s childhood accident which left him lame in his left leg.

the thunder rolled away, put his ear against the sounding-rim of the largest bell, – whence the great quivering, incommensurable rings of sound are shaken down and expand beyond the utmost horizon. And there had he heard, as it seemed to him, a strange tune running through and all throughout the mass, as though up there he *really* heard the sound which he always thought was in the world, an infinite music.

That day he saw carved on the inside of this bell, which was lit up by the reflection of the rain on the roof of the cathedral below, an old Frieslandish word, twice repeated –

‘Frithic – Frithic’.

Which is to say, – ‘Rich in Peace’.¹⁵

Attached to this bell, was a legend, with which Pierre was acquainted, and which ran to this effect. It had been cast a long way beyond where even its farthest sound could now reach – at Kantons in Gröningen, a place famous for bells; and its principle use had been as a signal to the fishermen when they were entering the Lauwer Zee during the long, misty, moonless nights of winter. So they in gratitude had cut upon it this twice-repeated word, which was also the name of the maker; a man who had lived two hundred years before the time of the grateful fishermen,¹⁶ and who had been a pious Christian missionary sent out of Westphalia, in hopes of weaning the fierce Frieslanders from the horrible paganism they professed.¹⁷ This Frithic, the missionary, was buried in sand heated with fire, by some wild Frieslanders; of whom the race was represented, as men said in the time of Pierre, by devils of strange form, who were numerous in the vast, blank, plains of that country: little red devils proper to the sands, the forests of dwarf oaks, and enormous expanses of gravelly waste which formed the major portion of these almost unknown provinces in the north. Out of the Forest States, as they were called, Friesland, Drent, and Gröningen, and where men supposed themselves away from the reach of these diminutive fiends, it was said that the murderers of Frithic expiated, themselves and their descendants for ever, this barbarism and idolatry in this form: – moreover the men of Kantons boasted that the ‘little men’ never dared harm this town, and that the bell, the work of the martyr himself, and which bore his name, quelled by its sound all evil spirits.

The great bell was brought from Kantons by Count Englebert of Limburg, when he went by command of the emperor to destroy the Albigenses in that country; and he gave it to his native town of Venloo.

To return to Pierre – the seeing these words on the bell and knowing this strange story, caused him such thought that many hours he sat in the belfry, reflecting that, however humble a man may be, he has it in his power, if he so resolved, to be of service to mankind, as was shown in the devotion of the missionary. Pierre himself would have rejoiced in similar death, to have achieved so much good. In his mind was strongly uppermost the reputed power of the bell over evil spirits. *We* may take this power in a typical point of view; but most assuredly to Pierre it stood forth as a tangible benefit, and a most glorious sign of Heaven’s approval of the life of Frithic. These thoughts filled his eyes with tears, and he cast about to do his share in the world’s advancement, and perceived the value of music to effect this, through its influence upon the hearts of men; therefore he resolved, as God seemed to have set this before him as a task, that he would take up the burthen; not for the sake of reward, but for the labour, hoping others might be benefited thereby. On descending at sunset there was in his face a set look, which sometimes gave awe to those who beheld it, and ever after the strong purpose of his heart thrust him forward to labour, as the water in the mill-race rushes forward the mill-wheel. *Laus Deo!*

I have said, a long way back, that his mother loved him for the beauty of his face and the gentleness of his disposition: and that ladies thought she was right when they saw it. Indeed, when she died which was after her husband about five years, and left Pierre alone, the wife of no less a person than Burgraf of Venloo, took him into her household to attend upon her; and so greatly did his loving

¹⁵ This bears some resemblance to the preface of Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which was translated into English as *Notre Dame: A Tale of the Ancien Régime* by William Hazlitt the Younger in 1833. In the preface, the narrator describes his discovery of an Ancient Greek word carved on the wall of the belfry of Notre-Dame.

¹⁶ [FGS’s note:] Our readers know into what serious matters playing upon words was admitted in the 15th century.

¹⁷ Another indication FGS worked on the tale in 1850, when WHH was painting *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids* (1849–50).

nature win upon this lady, that she cherished him like her own son; indeed could have prayed God to give her one, she being childless, although he was weak and sickly. But about this time his weakness left him, and he began to raise his head, moving more actively about: for he had little to do in the palace, and was not pressed upon by privations as before; his chief office being to hold the missal-cover for his mistress in the chapel, or to trim the silver lamp which burnt scented spirit by night or in dark days in winter; while his lady with her maidens wrought tapestry, or practised on the Viol or Regal, for the Burgraf loved music well; – so he practised incessantly to please him. Now while the playing was going on, was the happy hour of the day to Pierre; he would lay down and weep, so that none heard him. But one night, as the lady turned to seek some rosin for the viol bow (one of his offices was to bear in his girdle this strange substance, which by its harshness makes us find sound sweeter than without it); turning, she saw, I say, tears in his eyes, which the lamp made brighter, and rightly divining his feelings, she demanded:—

‘Wouldst thou like to play these instruments?’ and he answered:

‘Dear mistress, yes.’

So she had his education completed by the best instructors, Milanese Violists and Franconian Regal-Players. And he, such was the delight he took in those things, made progress that no musician in all the district could equal him; and still persisting, he became the most famous player in Limburg, Flanders, or Brabant.

When the noble Dames and Demoiselles, friends of the Lady of Venloo, came to visit her, Pierre would be commanded to entertain them with music and his voice. He preferred to play on the Regal, rather than the Viol, because then he could sit behind a curtain unseen; for, to hear the instruments alone, you would imagine some elegant youth or fair maiden was the player.

Thus he lived until he was about twenty years of age; when a new improvement was made in the construction of the Regal, rendering it somewhat more equal to the modern organ than it had been before. In order that Pierre might learn the use of this, his good mistress sent him to Bruges, where he became acquainted with many men, whose names we know even now; among these were his own townsmen, Johann and Hubert Van Eyck. With the first named of these Pierre became quite intimate – after sitting with him in his little werkstatt admiring his patience in exactly imitating whatever was before him. Whether it were the intricate folds of a dress, or the close tufty texture of velvets, or any goldsmith’s work, he set himself exactly to copy, disdaining to think that he could represent these things otherwise than in all possible fullness and care, – (as he would scorn to tell a tale in a strange language, by which to conceal its falsehood,) – doing nature honour for her own sake. This Van Eyck was a frank and simple man of great heart; an ardent admirer of his brother Hubert, treating the dreaming Pierre as a child bred among women; not seeing that passive love has its own beauty, – as the smooth water lies reflecting the sky, – his own more energetic nature seeking action only. Amongst others Pierre saw coarse detraction and unwilling admiration of their superiors in talent, and an exceeding turbulence of disposition, continually leading them into disputes among themselves and quarrels with the many foreigners residing in the city; but Van Eyck kept his own way steadily, doing every one more than justice, for any excellence he might possess. So, as might be imagined, there grew between these two different minds great love and friendship, which was never forgotten by either.

Pierre returned to Venloo, perfect in his art, and more famous than ever. During his absence, there came to visit his patroness, the young Demoiselle, her ward; before whom, one night, he was desired to play on his favourite instrument; doing so, he so delighted the Demoiselle, that she rose from her seat and came to see the musician. Looking over the curtain, she saw his face only, and could not but think him beautiful, as he sat in a robe of dark violet velvet; and saw his white neck and fine hands. He looked up: – a jewel she wore at her breast had struck the rod which carried the curtain round the seat for the player, and, in making a noise, had caused him to raise his eyes. Their looks met; and she, being very young could not prevent his perceiving that her thoughts were different from those of other women in regard to him. She stood some time, looking and listening, though he dared not look up again; for his heart beat fast, and his breath came quickly. Yet he did not lose command of his instrument, but varied the tune to an improvisation of his own, which was an appeal to love, or rather pity him. This change was so beautiful that, feeling its meaning, she retired from looking at him, and, when it was all over, went to rest. Then she could not avoid thinking of him, as a fair young man to love, if it were not for his station. Thus habituating her mind to the thought, before morning she thought to love him if he were a gay young knight, as fine a dancer as he was a musician; and her

fancy grew more during some days he was absent from the company at the table, composing music for a great entertainment the elder lady proposed to give. When this was completed, she no longer heeded the body, but thought of his mind alone; which inclination was strengthened by finding him modest and gentle in manners, quiet and much reserved in what concerned himself, though eager to praise others.

Now this went on some time; she loving him more and more every day, shame and affection conflicting in her mind. About this time, also, there came a great pestilence all over Europe, which was particularly evil in Flanders; and in Venloo most terrible. It was a swift-striking plague, so fearful that those who lived dreaded to sleep at night, sick with fear that they might be awakened by the cries of their family in the house, if taken with the evil. Very few recovered when attacked. Pierre was seized with this, when the fury was past, and many of the persons who made a living by attending upon the sick were dead, or worn out with watching. So the lady and the young Damoiselle, her ward, as became noble ladies, waited upon him and watched; for there was no certain cure known nor any relief; and if the sick person did not recover by nature, why there was no help.

Pierre was taken with this, I say; and, when the crisis came, which they knew by the ceasing of his cries, they held their hands together and waited. For a long time the angels of Life and Death fought over his body; at last Life conquered, and health returned towards him.

During this long watching she saw more to love; and also that, although God had given him but a weak body, he had a mind as pure as the white alb the priest wore, who came to visit him in his distress. So bear in mind, noble and chaste ladies, or honourable burgher-wives, or women of every degree; and you also, grave councillors, and lords, or all who pride yourselves on strength and wisdom; that God loves us all, and has not made one unequally, or superior above all others; that we have each some merit or savour to offer Him, so we do service; and easy and pleasant is the service.

During the period while Pierre was slowly drawing near to health, he thought of his lot in life with heart depressed by sickness, and fancied there was small delight for him in this world, – feeble, poor, and dependent. So he vowed, if his kind patroness would permit it, to become a monk, and go from among men to prepare for the next world by prayer and good deeds in this. He had little doubt that his mistress would, if she consented to do this, procure him a dispensation from the Pope, excusing the debilitated body from the prohibition that any such should take the vows of a priest, for she loved him well, as he knew.

Before very long he was entirely recovered, and went out into the garden to breathe pure air, and afterwards into the streets of the city; and was astonished that there appeared so few gone, although every person whom he knew had lost a friend, and some their whole families.

Pierre's melancholy becoming fixed, he soon asked his mistress's permission to fulfil the vow he had made. This was granted with a sad will; but she had seen what he had not in her ward's mind, and though she loved him like a son, would not have him allied to her family by marriage, lest others should say that she had wedded her ward to a dependant of her own, in order that her family might retain influence over the estates of the young Demoiselle. The lady, having given her consent, soon, by her influence, and that of her family, obtained the dispensation.

The Brotherhood of St Lambert, of Liege, which he proposed to join, also assisted his application, for they had a fine organ; of which, when he became one of their order, he was appointed organist at once, greatly to the glory and satisfaction of the Brotherhood, who now exulted in having the finest organ and the best player in all the provinces.

The Demoiselle continued to love the young Brother Lactantius for nearly a month after his taking the vows, and always went to the services in which he played; and, whenever she met one of the Brotherhood in his white gown, and the black hood drawn over the face, she trembled, yet almost hoped it might be he. But her friends now began to press her to marry; to do which, she, being a woman, was not averse, even though she really loved one already whom she could not marry: for women, such is the excellence of their nature, seek some staff on which to lean; so, a vine, if it meet not something which the tendrils of one joint may cling to and enring, puts forth another, joint after joint, until it is firmly attached, and may sustain great bunches of grapes. This being the case, she agreed to take for her husband a young Count of the Duchy of Brabant; a personable young man enough, with a splendid tawny moustache, fair round cheeks, and a reasonable reputation as a warrior. In a little time she was wedded to him; a kind-hearted gentleman enough, an excellent husband, though rather hasty tempered.

But Brother Lactantius never forgot the look he had encountered on the night of first seeing the

lady, or her kindness when he was near dying; and, growing older, and knowing more of men from knowing more of himself, he could recall many things in his conduct which exposed her real thoughts of him; and then he shed many bitter tears of joy that she should have loved him while he thought that none on earth could love him in that way: bitter, not because he repented of the act which gave him no hope now, but because love so rare as hers (he thought) should have been unappreciated by its object. Meanwhile, however, Lactantius obtained far greater reputation as organist of the cathedral of Liege than he had as the obscure dependant of the lady; for thousands of his fellow countrymen, and even some from France, who cared for music, came to hear him perform on the famous organ of the Brotherhood.

This needing repairs at one time, he obtained permission of the Lord Prior of St Lambert to go to Bruges, and fetch therefrom experienced workmen, such as his judgement might select among those of that city, who had always been famous for their skill in such matters. He went, and sought out a man whom he had heard spoken of as surpassing in skill. Now, while he was there, Lactantius renewed his acquaintance with Johann Van Eyck, whom he last saw painting from the interior of his own study, but now found a man world-famous, who was painting for princes and dukes, and had but lately made a picture for the king of England himself. The time when the tender-hearted monk went to see his old friend showed the change in his position more than anything that can be said. Going to the house, which he found in a fine quarter of the city – an old street, down which the great merchant wagons never went – he entered; and, stating himself as an old friend, was permitted, when the servants noticed his gown, to go straight into the werkstatt of the famous painter, who, sitting before his easel, did not hear his approach over the high-piled carpet of the room.

The monk stood by Johann, and watched in silence the progress of his work, which seemed no more than that of the hands of the horologe on a small table hard by. Busily and silently went on the hands themselves, but not the less, was the hour complete or the picture painted. Lactantius recognised the room in which he stood as forming the back-ground in the picture to two figures conversing; being almost finished, he could observe the open window, with fruit near, and the mirrors which hung opposite to him on the wall of the chamber; and the steel armluchter which Johann was painting, was pendent from the ceiling. On one of the arms of this was reflected his own white robe. The painter, seeing something he could not account for in this, turned round to look for the cause. His eyes, full of the perception of an inanimate object, slowly changed their expression on seeing Lactantius by his side; he rose then cordially to welcome him, with a sad look at his monkish robe; for he being vigorous and strong in health, thought it better to work and strive, than only to pray; not understanding any nature but his own. He was right glad to see his old friend Pierre again, and kissed him on the cheeks, holding both his hands. This delighted Pierre greatly, whose heart was shutting itself up at Liege, from the world. Johann soon took him round the room, to point out the works which stood against the wall in their cases, or were hung up framed in ebony. This was for the duke of Cleves; this was commissioned by the princely canons of Ghent, for their cathedral; and then another, just commenced, for the Pfalzgraf, who would be in the fashion and buy a picture of him. And then he told him, as a great secret, that he knew Von Armestein, the chamberlain to the duke of Bavaria, who heard his master mention his name at a great feast of nobles, at Augsburg; and told how the heavy, block-foreheaded Grafs and Feldherren lifted their dark eyes in something that resembled astonishment at the mention of a painter. All this he told as a child would; simply, very differently from the manners of the other painters Pierre had met in Bruges before. Afterwards Johann walked lightly over the floor to a beaufet, and drew from a little pile of books a small panel; and, placing it on an easel, beckoned Lactantius to come near and see. It was a portrait of a young female in a green dress of velvet. The face was a fair, German one, with shy, quiet, laughter about the eyes, and demurely compressed lips; it seemed to be smiling at some one in presence very quaintly; and, when Lactantius looked up at Johann, he was smiling too; – and spoke thus: ‘Van Bever’s daughter Katerine; the old glass-stainer gave us his consent two weeks ago, and now we are betrothed. That was finished yesterday, while she told me her sister Mary, who denied it, brought her to her father’s workshop at the time I waited for the tinted quarrel, up there in the window. They protest that I blushed like the curtain yonder. “What thinkest thou?” Either way, there still hangs the quarrel.’ And he laughed out loud; but, looking at Pierre, he saw tears standing in his eyes, and his face marked with grief. Forcing him into a chair, he sat himself down on a short stool, placed his large, white hands on the priest’s knee; and, looking into his face, demanded what ailed him that gave him such grief. Then Pierre told Johann the whole of his own story; while the latter wondered to hear a tale like that the

minnesāngers told at the summer-feasts in the villages. If he had not been in love himself at the time, he might have sneered at the presumption of Pierre, sickly and poor, in aspiring to a noble Demoiselle; however, he being in that condition, listened to him very kindly, and consoled his friend as well as he could; and, having heard all, sighed very deeply, and said, ‘There is no help. What is her name?’ At first Lactantius shrunk from telling this, which no other man knew; but then, resolved to trust the large-hearted painter, answered him: – ‘The Countess of Gagern!’ ‘The Countess of Gagern!’ exclaimed Johann; and, looking at the picture he had been working on just before, said, ‘That is for the Count her husband, and they come here, both of them, this morning.’ Then did Pierre turn pale and tremble, rising as if to go; but Van Eyck stayed him, thinking they would not arrive before he had taken some refreshment, or recovered from his agitation. And Pierre, not unwilling to see her again, however much he might suffer, consented to remain. Perhaps she might not recognise him; so he stayed. Johann sat down again at his easel to paint, with Lactantius by his side; the former carefully avoiding the subject which was nearest to his heart – the Jung-frau Van Bevor – ‘Katerine’, as he called her; but talking instead, nervously, of pictures and music, of which he was very fond, and he begged Pierre to play on a Regal, which was in the room, while he painted. This was done; and while he still played, the approach of the Lady of Gagern and her husband was announced. Then Pierre withdrew to the side of the room, as they entered, and were received with respectful cordiality by Johann. The fair-haired count did not seem to be ashamed to shake hands with the painter, or to be inclined to treat him insolently at all; but comporting himself as one gentleman would to another. The countess stood by his side, with her hand through the arm of her husband, smiling graciously and kindly at the conversation; she scarcely seemed changed in nine years, since Pierre had seen her last. They all stood before the picture, with the mirror in the front, on the wall facing them. The countess, therefore, saw all things in the room reflected in this mirror; and, raising her eyes, beheld Pierre, who had turned from a picture he had affected to be looking at, when their faces were turned his way. She saw, I say, Pierre’s face looking at her from the other side of the room, and recognising him at once, became so faint, that she clung to her husband’s arm, lest she should fall. In alarm the Count seated her on a couch, and cried to them to open the window still more, and throw the door wide, and hook back arras; then to send for the countess’s litter; after which he ran himself; but she recovered before his return, and stepped forward to the picture, and began speaking to Van Eyck. Then poor Pierre, who had long been certain she had loved him once, came forward, and stood with downcast eyes on the other side of the easel. The painter then stepped forward, seeing each wished to speak, and took their hands and placed them together; but no words came from either. Lactantius raised her hand to his lips and kissed it devoutly; whereupon she kneeled down at his feet; and he, placing his hands upon her head, blessed her in the name of the most Blessed Virgin. She then arose without daring to look into his face, and stood gazing upon the picture; though we may be sure she saw naught of it; but at last, looking at the mirror again, she saw her own and the figure of Pierre standing together in it. Her husband now returned; and she, bowing her head to Lactantius and the painter, descended to the entrance of the house, whither the latter attended them. When he returned above he found the priest on his knees, with his face to the wall, praying in silence. He took up his palette, and tried to paint until it grew dark. Then he rose, and noiselessly replaced his painting instruments in their cases, and sat down by the window, thinking; until he heard the footsteps of the glass-stainer and his daughter, when he went forth to meet them. And while they were thus standing on the stairs in talk, Lactantius came forth, and saluting them, passed down the stairs, and out of the house; and, completing his affairs in the city, returned to Liege the next day; and remained in that place all the rest of his life – many years; doing all the charity he could, and never ceasing to praise God.

Johann Van Eyck told his betrothed that very evening, in the same room, the story of the monk she had seen leave the house, and as the relation of a love tale, especially if unfortunate, always strengthens the affection of a woman for its object (for she says, ‘thus I love, thus am I devoted’), Katerine’s affection deepened for Johann as they knelt down at the easel, to pray that Lactantius might have peace, and after death rest in heaven; thanking for God their own better fate.

A few days after this, Johann, going to the house of the Count of Gagern, met the Countess; who, seeing that he was acquainted with the whole story, took him into a chamber, and inquired after his friend. He told her that Lactantius had gone back to Liege, and also all he knew about him. She then said that she wished to have painted in the picture, he was making for her husband the reflection, of their figures in the mirror, as she had seen it; that she might never forget him or his true heart.

Thus it was done; and so it remains still.

Appendix 5: A Visit to 10 Hammersmith Terrace

A letter from the artist Frank Cadogan Cowper (1877–1958) to his mother Edith, 27 January 1899, describing a visit made by him and fellow artist William Denis Eden (1878–1949) to 10 Hammersmith Terrace, the home of Frederic and Clara Stephens. The letter has never been published. It provides insights into several topics, not least the couple's large Pre-Raphaelite collection (see Appendix 2) and the character of Clara Stephens. Cowper is known for his Pre-Raphaelite-inspired paintings including *St Agnes Receiving from Heaven the Shining White Garment* (1905; Tate) and *Vanity* (1907; Royal Academy). Stephens had been Eden's art teacher at University College School.¹ Eden is less well-known than Cowper, but notable paintings include *John Cabot and his Sons Receive the Charter from Henry VII to Sail in Search of New Lands, 1496* (1910; Parliamentary Art Collection, London), and *The Old Apple Tree* (1914; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), both of which exhibit the influence of early Pre-Raphaelite painting.

MS: Royal Academy of Arts Archive, COW/1/a.

This afternoon Eden and I went to the house of Mr F. G. Stephens who was one of the original P.-R.B.[.] he gave us leave to go there to see his pictures, he wasn't there but his wife is a most stunning old lady and I never had such a time in my life[,] we saw and handled Millais' original pen drawing for the 'Carpenter's Shop'²[.] it was quite a different idea at first, as well as lots of other drawings of his and Holman Hunt's and Rossetti's and Madox Brown's[,] and saw portraits and photographs of them all when they were very young men. And we drank tea out of Christina Rossetti's cups³ and saw lots of things which belonged to them, and met Mrs Coventry Patmore (his third wife)⁴ who happened to be there, infact [sic] is feels as if we have really dropped into the Pre-Raphaelite world (œ what there is left of it) at last. It seems awful that they are all either dead or very old, but Mrs Stephens was simply delightful[,] a sort of Roman matron, as she said 'Nolly Brown' (Oliver Madox Brown)⁵ called her, only very jolly and never tired of talking especially about the early doings of the P.-R.B.

She told us what Ruskin is like now, he is ninety, and is in his dotage, quite imbecile apparently.⁶ She imitated the way he speaks to you now and she did it so well that you could see that he still has all [h]is mannerism and affectations and vanity left only his brain is completely gone, I should think it must be most pitiable to see him after what he has been. She seemed to have a great contempt for him, but I am not surprised at that as she must have been a most robust sort of woman both in mind and body all her life[,] as she is now in spite of her age[,] and is obviously a perfect lady by birth without a scrap of æstheticism or nonsense of any sort and seems to know everyone intimately[,] from Lord Leighton to Miss Siddal⁷[.] and told us little stories about them all[.] [S]he asked us to go again when we liked[,] when she or her husband will tell anything we want to know and show us heaps more things[,] the whole house from her bedroom to the hall was packed with treasures. We hope that someday we shall get to know Holman Hunt. But Eden and I daren't say anything about our wanting to follow the P.-R.B seriously until we have done something that we can show them[,] for old Mr Stephens is a very practical old chap being art-critic of the Athenæum and would not listen to us if we only talk, so I want to get my portrait and some drawings done to show them, soon.

¹ 'My husband was taught by F. G. Stephens & we know more than most people about the movement'; Helen Parry Eden (wife of William Eden) to John Bryson, 17 September 1942, Bryson Bequest files, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

² See Appendix 2, No. 4.

³ FGS evidently acquired Christina Rossetti's cups from WMR after her death in December 1894: 'And do you know he [WMR] has sold her little belongings of other kinds, calling one or two friends in to take such memorials of her as they cared for, at a price fixed by him. [...] Stephens was one, and he bought several things'; Arthur Hughes to Alice Boyd, 28 August 1895, quoted in William E. Fredeman, 'A Pre-Raphaelite Gazette: The Penkill Letters of Arthur Hughes to William Bell Scott and Alice Boyd, 1886–79: 2', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 50, no. 1 (1967): 59.

⁴ Coventry Patmore (1823–96) had married his third wife, Harriet Robson, in 1881.

⁵ Oliver Madox Brown (1855–74), the son of Ford Madox Brown and Emma Hill, was nicknamed 'Nolly'.

⁶ Ruskin died the following year at the age of 80 rather than 90.

⁷ Frederic Leighton had died in 1896, Elizabeth Siddall in 1862.