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SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

LITTLE BOOKS ON ART

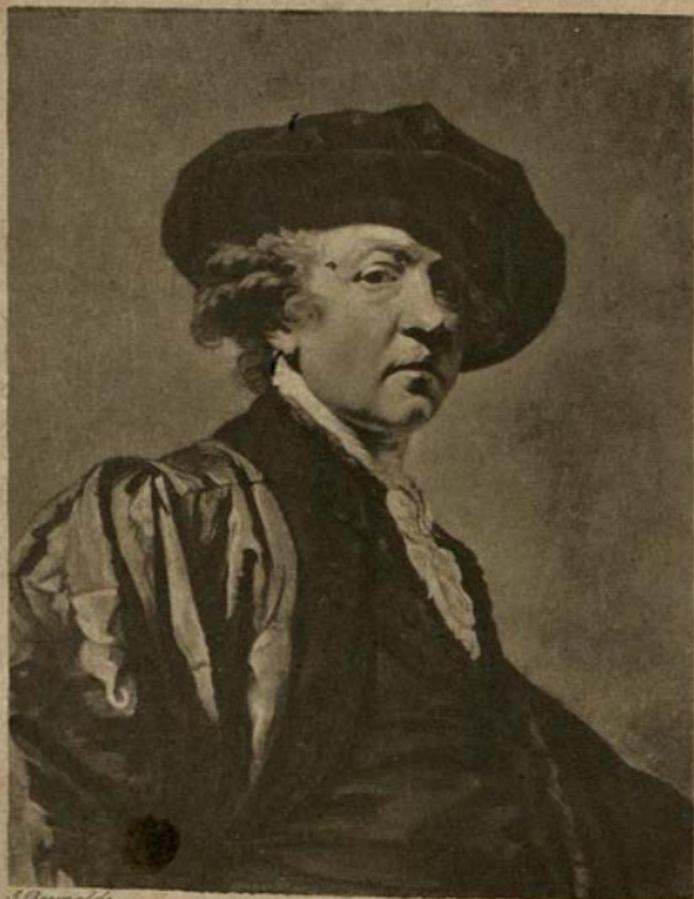
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*Sir Joshua Reynolds.
(Offizi. Portrait.)*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

BY

JOHN SIME

"Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none"

—*Discourse V.*, REYNOLDS

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TO MY FRIEND
ERNEST RADFORD

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“The mind of the artist is continually labouring to advance, step by step, through successive gradations of excellence, towards perfection, which is dimly seen, at a great though not hopeless distance, and which we must always follow because we never can attain; but the pursuit rewards itself.”—*Discourse IX.*, REYNOLDS.

“You will, I doubt not, willingly permit me to begin your lessons in real practice of art in the words of the greatest of English painters: one also, than whom there is indeed no greater, among those of any nation, or any time,—our own gentle Reynolds.”—JOHN RUSKIN, *Lectures on Art*, p. 150. Allen: 1892.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Devonshire and art—Influence of Sir Joshua on English art.

ENGLAND owes much to the fair county of Devon. Her sons have left their mark on history. Raleigh, Hawkins, Drake, John Churchill—the puissant Duke of Marlborough—are among her heroic sons in action. The poetry of her sweeping moorlands, the beauty of her rich woodlands and soft skies, have from time to time entered into the souls of her children, with the result that Devon, beautiful herself among the counties, has produced her full share of artists and dreamers as well as men of action, who, if not always in the front rank, have yet added substantially to the beauty of the world. James Northcote, a loyal Devon man, and an artist whose work deserves more recognition than it has received,

mentions in his list of painters born in Devon the names of Hudson (Reynolds's master), Hayman (Gainsborough's master), Cosway, Humphry, Downham, Cross, and Gandy—all more or less eminent in their time; and to these can be added Haydon, Prout, and Eastlake—a goodly roll. But the artist of whom Devon has most reason to be proud, and who, all through life, kept in close touch with his native county, is the subject of this brief memoir—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

To him English art owes more than to any other Englishman. Hogarth, a little earlier in point of time, had shown that an Englishman could paint as originally, as forcibly as the foreigner, but his great gifts were chiefly employed in satirical and dramatic painting of an insular interest. Reynolds, by his achievement and by the principles which he laid down in his *Discourses*, for the first time brought English art into line with the great European movements of the past. When his brush began its work native art in England was at a low ebb. The galleries of royalty and of the aristocracy, of men of wealth and taste, were filled with the works of foreign schools. The Italian, the Dutch, the Flemish, the German, and the French were all represented, but

English native art found no favour, and deserved little. From some mysterious cause England, long in the front rank among the nations in poetry, in literature, in philosophy, in science, in war, and in commerce, had hardly, if Hogarth is excepted, and, perhaps, Dobson and Thornhill, produced a single painter whose name was known beyond "the silver streak." Into the causes of this strange gap in our civilisation this is not the place to penetrate, but it can truthfully be said that it was chiefly by the noble and lovely quality of Sir Joshua Reynolds's work, even when we admit its limitations, by the inspiring vigour of his influence and thought—for he was hardly less eminent as an art critic than he was supreme as an artist—that we owe the renaissance of painting in England in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

So much can be said without disparaging the work of the galaxy of great artists, his contemporaries yet his juniors in years—Gainsborough, Barry, Romney, Opie, and others of lesser fame, all of whom owed more to Reynolds than they were probably conscious of, and all of whom certainly did much to make English art what it has since become. The rivalry of these men—sometimes bitter in its day—now

that the heart-burnings and jealousies that only marked their common humanity are forgotten, we can see, stimulated each of them to their highest efforts. Before Reynolds appeared with his flood of fresh ideas, the English painters were content with conventional and laborious imitation of the great foreigners—Holbein, Rubens, Vandyck, Lely, and Kneller—who from time to time made their home in England, encouraged by the patronage of our kings and nobility. They were unambitious; often of lowly social position; led Bohemian lives; they were generally poor, sometimes at starvation point; uneducated in any wide sense of the word; and their ideals were low. Reynolds, endowed with social gifts almost as finely as with artistic powers, changed all that. A man of good breeding and of wide culture, he mingled on equal terms with the most distinguished men in literature and politics of his age. His foreign travel familiarised him with the world's masterpieces in art and inspired him with high ideals. His rare gifts as a painter, combined with an industry little less than colossal, gave his achievement mass as well as charm. In short, his personality—as a man, as a painter, as a thinker—raised the whole social status of the Artist in England.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH OF REYNOLDS

Plympton—Grammar School, a nursery of artists—His home-life—His father, the Rev. Samuel Reynolds—Early bias towards art.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS was born on the 16th of July, 1723, at Plympton Earl, in Devonshire.

The estuary of the Plym once on a time flowed to the castle walls of Plympton, but the tide has gradually receded until the estuary and the river are two miles distant from the town. Plympton has a quiet beauty all her own, and is not lacking in interesting historic associations. The Priory, to which in ancient days the estuary was the water-way from Plymouth, was one of the most ancient in Devon. Worth, in his *History of Devonshire*, says that "the college consisted of a Dean and four Canons; and when they refused to give up their wives, or as Leland said, 'wold not leve their concubines,' it was suppressed by Bishop Warelwast,

6 SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

nephew of the Conqueror, in 1121." It was succeeded by the great Augustinian Priory of St. Peter and St. Paul, which became one of the wealthiest religious houses in the West. Plympton can boast that it was important in days when Plymouth was hardly more than a fishing village. An old local couplet runs :—

" Plympton was a borough town
When Plymouth was a furzy down."

The ruins of the Norman castle at Plympton, built by Richard de Redvers, Earl of Devon, in the reign of Henry I., still stand to hint of a vanished glory. Baldwin de Redvers made Plympton a borough town, with market and fairs, in 1241, and its municipal functions lasted until 1859—interesting here inasmuch as the name of Sir Joshua Reynolds is enrolled on its lists of aldermen and mayors. The town sent its representative to Parliament from the days of Edward I. until the reforming broom brushed its political rights away in 1832.

The father of Joshua Reynolds, the Rev. Samuel Reynolds, was Head Master of the Plympton Earl Grammar School. The school, according to Worth, was founded by Elise, or Elizeus Hale, in 1644; but, according to Cotton, by Serjeant Maynard in 1658. Joshua was the seventh child of a family of eleven; of these six

predeceased the father. The house, connected with the school, in which Joshua and the greater part of this large family were born, has been replaced by a modern building ; but the school itself, with its picturesque cloister, still remains. It has been a nursery of painters. Besides Sir Joshua, it is interesting to know that his brothers of the brush, James Northcote, Benjamin M. Haydon, and Sir C. L. Eastlake played in the cloister and sat on its benches.

Reynolds came of a good clerical stock. His father and his grandfather were clergymen ; two of his father's brothers were also in Orders ; and his mother and her mother were daughters of clergymen. Malone absurdly suggests that Joshua was so named in the hope that at some future time some benefactor of the same unusual prefix might befriend him. Joshua was in reality named after his uncle Joshua, a Fellow of Corpus Christi, Oxford, who was also his godfather. It is curious that in the register of Plympton the child, by some accident, was entered as "Joseph, son of Samuel Reynolds, Clerk," instead of Joshua. The error, Northcote surmises, happened by the slip of paper being handed to the registrar in the shortened form, "Jos. son of Samuel Reynolds, Clerk." Before he accepted the

Head Mastership of Plympton School Samuel Reynolds had been a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. The mastership was worth only £120 a year, with a house; but it enabled him to marry Theophila Potter, a sweet young, if dowerless, girl. Little information has come to us of Reynolds's mother, but she is described as a woman of unwonted intelligence. It can well be imagined that much wise management was needed on the mother's part, with such an income, to feed so many mouths. Samuel Reynolds was a man of simple tastes, unworldly, perhaps lacking in energy, but of remarkable character. One can read the gentleness and kindness, with a certain gleam of humour, in every line of the loving portrait of him painted by his son. When Goldsmith, many years later, dedicated to Reynolds "The Deserted Village," Reynolds said that the description of the village preacher was an admirable portrait of his father.

"A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wished to change his place;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise."

Certain sayings of the father survive that

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mark him as possessing breadth of mind, as well as humour. For instance, "It is a good thing to avoid bigotry, but a man must not therefore throw up his religion." On his wife's name, Theophila, he was fond of playing variations.

"When I say 'The,'
You must make the tea ;
But when I say 'Offy,'
You must make coffee."

The same doggerel, later in life, was applied, with extensions, by Sir Joshua to his niece "Offy," while she kept house for him in London.

"When I drink tea, I think of my 'The,'
When I drink coffee, I think of my 'Offy' ;
So, whether I drink my tea or my coffee,
I always am thinking of thee, my Theoffy."

The father took due care of his children's education. Joshua must have been well-grounded in Latin and in general literature. Certainly, later in life, his time was so absorbed in his art and in society, that he could have had little opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of classics other than he obtained at school. And that he had such knowledge is manifest from the fact that Dr. Johnson submitted to him his Latin epitaph written on Goldsmith (the subject of the famous

“Round Robin” from “the Club”) for his criticism and suggestions.

At a very early age the artistic temperament began to assert itself in young Reynolds. When it took the form of scribbling sketches on the back of school exercises, it brought the parental rebuke on him. On one such exercise his father wrote, “This is drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness.” He had hardly learned to read when he devoured *The Jesuit's Perspective*, and, with some precocity, applied the rules of the treatise in sketching the pillared arches of the school cloister. The result amazed his father, who said, “Now this exemplifies what the author asserts in his Preface—that by observing the rules laid down in this book, a man may do wonders—for this is wonderful!” The boy was speedily copying his elder sister's sketches, his father's prints, the illustrations in Plutarch's *Lives*, and the quaint drawings scattered through Jacob Cat's *Book of Emblems*. The family was sketched with and without consent. Even the white-washed wall of a long passage in the school-house made a useful ground for juvenile frescoes, the medium being a burnt stick. At twelve he was experimenting in “oil.” In the absence of painter's regulation canvas, he

procured a bit of old boat-sail (necessity being the mother of invention), and with shipwright's paint and rough brush he produced a recognisable likeness of the Rev. Thomas Smart, tutor to the Edgcumbe family, who is described as a "jolly moon-faced tutor and parson," the picture extant to this day. This effort was struck off in the boathouse, with the help of a surreptitious sketch of the parson drawn in church.

CHAPTER III

EARLY INFLUENCES

Influence of Jonathan Richardson—Received into studio of Thomas Hudson—Shakes hands with Poet Pope—Hudson's unkindness—Return to Devon—London again—Early portraits.

WHETHER among his father's books, or by loan from a friend, Richardson's *Treatise on the Theory of Painting* fell, at the "psychological moment," into the young artist's hand. Already his hand was hungering for the pencil, and his eye was revelling in the natural beauty of his surroundings, when Richardson filled him with ambition to devote his life to art. He was fired with Richardson's enthusiasm. Richardson was a John-the-Baptist in English art. His own work (good specimens are in the National Portrait Gallery, notably his portrait of Sir Richard Steele) was marked by a certain power and charm, marred by hardness and a tendency to conventionality. His critical

sense, however, was keen, and the condition of the native art of his time filled him with despair. It was scanty comfort that all Europe was in "the trough of the wave" when he wrote. But his prophetic eye saw better times coming. "I am no prophet," he wrote, "nor the son of a prophet; but considering the necessary connection of causes and effects . . . I will venture to pronounce (as exceedingly probable) that if ever the ancient, great, and beautiful taste in painting revives, it will be in England; but not till English painters, conscious of the dignity of their country and their profession, resolve to do honour to both by Piety, Virtue, Magnanimity, Benevolence, and a contempt of everything that is really unworthy of them." Again, elsewhere, after protesting against English art being "lorded" over by foreign painters: "Let us at length disdain as much to be in subjection in this respect as in any other; let us put forth our strength and employ our national virtue, that haughty impatience of subjection and inferiority which seems to be characteristic of our nation, in this as on many other illustrious occasions, and the thing will be effected: the English School will rise and flourish."

The ardent and patriotic optimism of Richardson roused to effort two such widely differing types of mind as Hogarth and Reynolds. Hogarth, powerful a genius as he was, allowed his strength and vitality to verge on brutality. The ethical aim, always strong in Hogarth, too often outweighed the æsthetic. In young Reynolds the inspiring words of Richardson implanted the desire to bring England into proper line with other civilised nations in painting. It begot in the first place a longing to see what had been done in the world by the Great Masters. It is true, as Mr. Comyns Carr points out in his admirable essay on "Sir Joshua Reynolds,"¹ that "his vision of beauty far transcended the limits of his own accomplishment"; in other words, that his ideal was ever higher than his practice reached; yet Reynolds did much, ere he died, to inaugurate the new era predicted by Richardson.

But the pressing question in the Plympton household, when Joshua reached the age of seventeen, was—what of his future? Was he, as his father wished, to study medicine, or was he to follow his own inclination and devote his life to art? His father took counsel with a Mr. Cutliffe, of Bideford, and with

¹ *Papers on Art*. Macmillan, 1885.

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Mr. Craunch, good friends of the family, and admirers of the youth's talents, and they submitted specimens of Joshua's work to Mr. Hudson, the fashionable London portrait-painter (whose work is represented in the National Portrait Gallery, and in the National Gallery), with result that in October, 1740, Joshua was formally "apprenticed" to Mr. Hudson.

Thomas Hudson was a Devonian, son-in-law of Jonathan Richardson. Hudson received £120 premium with his new pupil, a large sum from the poor parson's household, but Mrs. Palmer (Joshua's elder married sister) was able to advance half of the necessary amount. He was soon hard at work in Hudson's studio in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The proud father reports of some of Joshua's drawings left at home, and passing from hand to hand for friendly criticism in the family circle, that Mr. Warmel, the painter, said, "they all deserved frames and glasses"; and far-seeing Dr. Huxham, who saw a copy of "Laocoon," a drawing of Joshua's, predicted that "he who drew that would be the first hand in England."

He soon began to give the home circle little

glimpses into London studio life. His father, writing to a friend, says, "Just now I had a letter from Joshua wherein he tells me, 'on Thursday Sir Robert Walpole sits for his picture; master says he has had a great longing to draw his picture, because so many have been drawn, and none like.'" In a later letter he reports that Walpole's "head is finished entirely to his (Walpole's) satisfaction." His father writes in August, 1742 (Joshua had been nearly two years in London now): "As for Joshua, nobody, by his letters to me, was ever better pleased in his employment, in his master, in everything. 'While I am doing this I am the happiest creature alive,' is his expression."

An incident at a sale of pictures, to which he went on behalf of Hudson, delighted him. While the sale was proceeding Mr. Pope made his way into the room, and the buyers, recognising the great poet, made way for him to advance to a good place. Pope shook hands indiscriminately with acquaintances and admirers; and the eager youth, watching his opportunity, had the honour of shaking hands with Pope. Reynolds's verbal description of the poet brings the man in very few words vividly before our eyes. Pope was, he says,

“about four feet six inches high; very hump-backed and deformed. He wore a black coat, and, according to the fashion of that time, had on a little sword. He had a large and very fine eye, and a long handsome nose; his mouth had those peculiar marks which are found in the mouths of crooked persons, and the muscles which run across the cheek were so strongly marked that they seemed like small cords.” This is a painter’s description.

At first Hudson seems to have treated Reynolds kindly enough. He was a fellow-Devonian, and Reynolds had duly paid his premium. Moreover, Reynolds was a conscientious worker. His work for Hudson seems to have been principally preparing canvases, painting draperies, figures, and backgrounds; but on his own account he was copying masters when opportunity offered, and sketching portraits. Hudson soon perceived that Reynolds had not much to learn from him. Indeed there seemed a danger that this alert and open-eyed youth would speedily master all “the secrets of the trade,” and might conceivably utilise his knowledge in rivalry. A portrait by Joshua of one of the household showed too much merit. So one morning he was informed, to his astonish-

ment, "You have not obeyed my orders, and shall not stay in my house"; and this because he had postponed the delivery of a picture for a few hours on account of a violent downpour of rain. The dismissal was peremptory; and if the youth (he was then nineteen) had not chanced to have an uncle resident in London it might have fared badly with him. To the sensitive nature of the young artist it must have been a cruel blow. If Northcote's and Farington's accounts of the rupture contain the whole truth, and there is no reason to doubt their version, it reveals Hudson as a man of jealous and vindictive temper. The punishment was out of all proportion to the offence, if offence it could be called. Reynolds's stay with Hudson, however, was not lost time. He gained valuable insight into the methods and practice of a professional artist's life. He learned all that was to be gained in that quarter of the grammar of his art. Joshua's sudden dismissal from Hudson's studio brought dismay on the quiet Plympton household. His father was too much of a philosopher to lay the matter to heart. Joshua returned to Plympton, ruffled in feelings, but eager for work. He was fully equipped to stand on his own feet. Very soon he was

busily engaged painting portraits at Plymouth Dock. By 1744 he had painted twenty portraits, "with ten more bespoke," his father reports. Among them, "the greatest man of the place, the Commissioner of the Dockyard." Seven portraits of the Kendal family, dated 1744, exist. A receipt of Joshua's shows that he received £7 for two pictures of Mrs. Kendal.

Before the end of 1744 he returned to London, reconciled to Hudson, but no longer employed in his studio. In December his father writes: "Joshua by his master's means is introduced into a Club composed of the most famous men in their profession." This was, doubtless, "The Artists' Club," which met at Old Slaughter's, in St. Martin's Lane. It included among its members Hogarth, McArdeU, Roubiliac, "Old Moser," Gwynn, etc., all senior to Reynolds in years, and men of established reputation. Evidently Hudson tried to atone for his harshness. In the following May the anxious father writes: "Joshua's master is very kind to him; he comes to visit him pretty often, and freely tells him where his pictures are faulty, which is a great advantage; and when he has finished anything of his own he is pleased to ask Joshua's judgment, which

is a great honour." Neither Malone, Farington, nor Northcote say where Reynolds lived at this time.

In 1746 he painted a portrait of Captain Hamilton, father of the Marquis of Abercorn, which attracted some attention. The influence of Hudson in it is perceptible, but it was so well done that Reynolds, nearly a generation later, coming upon it deplored, with characteristic modesty, that he had not made greater progress in his art in the intervening years. Captain Hamilton appears in a charming group, painted about the same period, of Lord Eliot, his wife and children, with Mrs. Goldsworthy, Captain Hamilton being represented carrying one of the children pick-a-back. He painted also the individual portraits of Lord Eliot with his dog, and a half-length of Lady Eliot in white satin. There is also a portrait of Commodore Edgcumbe, who proved to be one of Reynolds's truest and kindest friends.

CHAPTER IV

ITALIAN TOUR

Death of his father—Plymouth Dock—Influence of William Gandy—Early portraits of himself—Introduction to Keppel—Accompanies Keppel to Italy—Accident at Minorca—Impressions of the great masters, Michael Angelo and Raphael—His sketch books—Caricatures—His friends in Rome—Anecdote of Astley—At Paris—Homeward bound.

LATE in the autumn of 1746 Joshua was summoned from London to Plympton by the serious illness of his loved father, who died on Christmas Day of that year. He had lived long enough to see his favourite boy on the high road to success in the profession to which he could devote every energy with heart and soul.

The death of Samuel Reynolds changed the whole plan of life of the Plympton household. The eldest brother, Robert (nine years older than Joshua), had settled at Exeter. The rest of the family (Mrs. Reynolds predeceased

her husband), two unmarried sisters, Elizabeth and Frances, with Joshua moved from the School House to a house at Plymouth Dock, where the two sisters lived with Joshua. They made their home there for three years. Malone reports that Reynolds afterwards looked on these three years as practically wasted. Yet the work that remains of these years bespeak no small industry. He was emancipating his style from the influence of Hudson; much helped in this by a careful study of the work of William Gandy, a remarkable artist of Exeter, whose pictures he must have had an opportunity of examining while visiting his brother Robert, at Exeter. Reynolds preferred Gandy's work to Kneller's. A homely image of Gandy's was often repeated by Reynolds with approval. "A picture," said Gandy, "ought to have a richness in texture, as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese, and the reverse of a hard and husky or dry manner."

Though the three years at Plymouth Dock were full of work, it is evident that the ambitious nature of Reynolds was pining either for the fuller artistic and social scope of London, or, with even greater ardour, for an opportunity to see some of the great works



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of art in foreign cities. During these years he painted a fascinating picture of "a boy reading in a reflected light," dated 1747; portraits also of Mrs. Field; of his father's faithful friends and neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Craunch; of Captain Chaundy, R.N., and his wife; and of Miss Chudleigh, afterwards Duchess of Kingston. There is also a fine portrait "head" of himself described by Leslie as "masterly in handling, and powerful—almost Rembrandtesque—in chiaro-scuro. The white collar and ruffled front of the shirt are thrown open. A dark cloak is thrown over the shoulders." In addition to these portraits, one of the comparatively few landscapes from his brush that survives, dates from 1748. It is a highly finished view of Plymouth from Catdown Hill, and belonged to the Earl of St. Germans.

In the following year, 1749, the dream of many an hour became for Reynolds a reality—he was to see Italy! If we would conceive how Reynolds looked at the time this stroke of good fortune came to him we cannot do better than examine that delightful portrait of himself painted in the previous year, now in the National Portrait Gallery.¹ It presents a youth-

¹ See p. 22. S. W. Reynolds.

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ful figure at the easel, palette and maul-stick in the left hand, while the right shades a young, eager face; alert eyes with a hint of the dreamer in them: the knit brows bent earnestly on the sitter. The treatment of lights and shadows, the rippling hair, the dimpled chin, the modelling of the hands, and careless yet sufficiently picturesque costume, the sober harmony of colour, all proclaim that the youth who was capable of painting such a picture was ripe for Italy. The opportunity came in unexpected form. At Lord Edgcumbe's, a friend of Joshua's from boyhood, Reynolds was introduced in 1749 to Commodore Keppel, whose features are familiar to us in Reynolds's portraits; he was (luckily for Reynolds) detained in Plymouth while his ship was undergoing repairs. Keppel, two years younger than Reynolds, was greatly attracted by the brilliant young artist, and, learning that his ambition was to visit Italy, offered to give him passage to the Mediterranean and to land him on Italian soil. We can easily imagine the delight of Reynolds. Arrangements were soon made. His two married sisters, Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Johnson, and his father's faithful friend, Mr. Craunch, offered financial help, with the result that Joshua, in high

spirits, sailed with Keppel, on board the *Centurion*, on the 11th May, reaching Lisbon, their first halting-place, on the 24th. From there he visited Gibraltar and Algiers, and, by the latter part of August, Reynolds landed at Port Mahon in Minorca, where the Governor, General Blakeney, and the officers of the garrison gave him, on Keppel's introduction, a cordial welcome. His visit to Minorca had practical results, for he painted the portraits of many of the officers. The pleasure of his visit was marred by an unfortunate accident. While riding among the mountains his horse fell with him over a precipice; he was much injured. Northcote says that part of his upper lip had to be cut away. The scar on his lip is plainly indicated in all his later portraits. At the time he wrote: "My lips are spoiled for kissing." The accident prolonged his stay at Port Mahon for two months. On his recovery he proceeded to Leghorn, from there he went to Florence, and on to Rome. Arrived at Rome, he wrote to Lord Edgcumbe, after referring to the hospitality and kindness of Commodore Keppel on the voyage, "I am now at the height of my wishes, in the midst of the greatest works of art that the world has produced."

He was profoundly impressed by the masters, and their influence on his mind, as on his art, can hardly be over-estimated. He drank deep of their beauty and grace. They were years, as he said, of "measureless content." He found that even to appreciate aright the masterpieces of Michael Angelo and Raphael, he had to unlearn much. To his surprise and embarrassment his first feeling on studying them was that of disappointment. To quote his own words: "In justice to myself, however, I must add, that, though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master (Raphael), I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raphael, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them, as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating things that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of work executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted. I felt my ignorance and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was at the lowest ebb,—it could not,

indeed, be lower,—were to be totally done away with and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become ‘as a little child.’ Notwithstanding my disappointment I proceeded to copy some of these excellent works. . . . In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn on me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. . . . I am now clearly of opinion that a relish for the higher excellencies of the art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation and great labour and attention. . . . Let it be remembered that the excellence of Raphael’s style is not on the surface, but lies deep, and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye, for a time, without ever satisfying the judgement. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts.”

There fortunately still exist several sketch-books (used also as diaries) by Reynolds during this tour. They contain notes of the

pictures that attracted him in the various Italian galleries and churches; with pencil-studies of figures, heads, and limbs; effects of light and shade; notes on colour and composition; sketches of tree-trunks, landscape, and architecture. They contain memoranda and hints that he occasionally utilised in his later work, notably in the famous portrait of Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia, and Mrs. Crewe as St. Geneviève. These deeply interesting relics, in their worn vellum covers, bring very vividly before our eyes to-day, not only the particular works of art that then appealed to him and influenced him, but they tell of the joy of his early enthusiasm in presence of the great masters. Two of the note-books, one a small quarto, the other a duodecimo, are in the Print Room of the British Museum. I have been privileged to give, on page 28, a reproduction from one of the leaves of the quarto sketch-book there. The sketch is in pencil; it is introduced amidst Reynolds's comments on Venetian churches and pictures; its subject is that of a woman bending slightly to speak to a beggar; she points with outstretched right hand, as if directing him. Mr. Binyon¹ describes it thus from Reynolds's note—

¹ Vol. iii. p. 219, f. 45, Brit. Mus. Catalogue.



women in black white Handkerchief, & before
54. her in Red light catches on his left foot & part
of leg, left shoulder & tips of his fingers
in shadow of the mark

“Woman in black, white handkerchief; he before her in red; light catches on his left leg, left shoulder, and tips of his fingers. Tint in School of St. Mark.” The drawing is probably a rough impression of some picture in Venice that attracted Reynolds’s attention. Mr. Lawrence Binyon has transcribed the greater part of the notes from the Italian sketch-books in the recently published (1902) third volume of the British Museum Official Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists in the Print Room. There are two sketch-books of the same period, and of similar character, in the Soane Museum; another was in the possession of the late Mr. Locker-Lampson, a connoisseur well able to appreciate its value; and others (bought at the Rogers’ sale) are, or were, in the possession of Colonel Lennox of New York.

The works of Michael Angelo and Raphael were the shrines at which he worshipped during his residence at Rome. He does not appear to have attempted to copy anything of Michael Angelo’s, but we know from his Discourses, and from his letters, how deep was his reverence for that great genius. Michael Angelo represented in his mind all that was highest and greatest in art. He speaks of him as “the Homer of painting.” When Reynolds

painted his own portrait for the Uffizi (see frontispiece; Valentine Green), he painted a bust of Michael Angelo on the table by his hand. The last word of his last Discourse to the Royal Academy students was Michael Angelo's name. For his seal he always used an impression of Michael Angelo's head. When Reynolds's own statue came to be placed in St. Paul's Cathedral, Flaxman carved Michael Angelo's head on the pillar. But of direct influence of Michael Angelo's style there is in Reynolds very little trace. Neither in subject, nor in treatment, did he attempt to imitate him. The influence of Raphael, in sweetness, in grace, in dignified simplicity of design, in rich harmony of colour, is much more perceptible.

Though Reynolds did not do much "copying" (he regarded elaborate copying of pictures as of very little educational advantage to young painters), he made careful studies in oil of the work of Raphael, Titian, Rembrandt, Guido, and Rubens. His zeal cost him much. He had the great misfortune while copying in the Vatican to contract a severe chill that resulted in his permanent deafness; he was compelled to use an ear-trumpet for the rest of his life. Of the pictures touched upon in his note-books

are Vandyck's portrait of "Pontius, the Engraver"; an "Angel's Head" by Correggio; an "Ecce Homo" by Guido; Titian's "Last Supper"; Titian's own Portrait; and his "Venus hoodwinking Cupid"; Raphael's "St. Catherine," etc.

In Rome he amused himself by painting several caricatures. One (a commission) was a parody based on Raphael's "School of Athens," in which he depicted a number of English gentlemen then in Rome, clad in eighteenth-century costumes, wigs, hats, etc., in the attitudes of the Greek philosophers. It was a branch of art alien to his talents, and was very soon abandoned.

In Rome he made many friends, not only among his brother artists, but with the whole English colony there, and with many travellers of distinction on the "Grand Tour." With others who became his friends and introduced him to "sitters" on his return to England, were Lord Charlemont, Sir W. Lowther, Lord Downe, and Lord Bruce. Among the English artists then in Rome were Nathaniel Hone, who, later in life, proved a sharp thorn in Reynolds's path; Richard Wilson, the landscapist; and Astley, the brilliant and (at that period) "out-at-elbows" Irishman. It is

related of Astley that, being at a picnic near Rome on a hot day, the company took off their coats. Astley, in doing so, revealed that the back of his waistcoat was made of one of his canvases, on which was painted a tremendous waterfall, to the no small amusement of his companions.

From Rome, on 5th April, 1752, Reynolds paid a brief visit to Naples. A month later he left Rome and proceeded to Florence, *via* Castel-Nuovo, Narni, Spoleto, and Perugia (at Assisi he sketched one of the gates), and arrived at Florence on the 10th of May. At Florence he met John Wilton, the sculptor, and took the opportunity to paint his portrait. From Florence, in July, he went on to Bologna, where he spent ten days in study; then on to Modena, Mantua, Ferrara, arriving in Venice on the 24th of July. At Venice he remained three weeks. His Venetian note-book is filled with careful, minute, and practical memoranda of the pictures that he studied, and they were many. Leslie says of these notes, they are "the remarks of an observant workman upon perfect workmanship." He left Venice for England on the 16th of August, returning *via* Padua, Breschia, and Milan. On the homeward journey, near Turin, he came across

his old master, Hudson, and Roubiliac, the sculptor, travelling to Rome. Reynolds brought with him from Rome a youth, Giuseppe Marchi, who was his first pupil. Marchi's rather effeminate face is familiar from Reynolds's portrait, painted with a suggestion of Rembrandt's force (now in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House); it was finished shortly after their arrival in London. It was of this picture that Hudson said to Reynolds, with perhaps a tinge of jealousy in its candour: "You do not paint so well as you did before going to Italy." Marchi never attained eminence in painting, but he made his mark as an engraver.

During the month that he remained in Paris Reynolds painted a beautiful portrait of Mrs. Chambers, wife of the distinguished architect, afterwards Sir William Chambers. A portrait also of Mr. Gauthier was painted by him while he was in Paris. He spent much time in the Parisian galleries and studios. To Reynolds, fresh from a close and sustained study of all that was best in Rome, Florence, and Venice, the artificial and affected style of contemporary French painters seemed flippant and unworthy where it was not positively corrupt.

On October 16th, 1752, he arrived in London, after an absence of three and a half years.

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The first few months after his return were spent with his friends in Devonshire, partly to recruit his health, which had suffered ; but his own ambitions, and the counsel of his friend, Lord Edgcumbe, who had it in his power to help him, soon sent him to London, where he was seriously to begin the great work of his life.

CHAPTER V

IN LONDON

On his style, and aspirations—On portraiture—Ruskin's tribute—Reynolds's optimism as to the future of art—Dr. Johnson and Thomas Carlyle on "the portrait,"

EARLY in 1753 Reynolds, now thirty years of age, came to London, hopeful, enthusiastic, with high ideals, and eager for work. His first lodging was at 104, St. Martin's Lane, at the house in which Sir James Thornhill (Hogarth's father-in-law) formerly lived. He returned from Italy with a style fully formed—a style which strengthened and mellowed as time passed, rather than changed. If the influence of Raphael, or Paul Veronese, or Correggio, of Rembrandt, or Rubens is perceptible in his work at different stages, no "influence" interfered with the individual note of his own strong, original mind. In Reynolds's fourth Discourse to the students of the Royal Academy he broadly classified the different styles of the great schools as (1) the "Great" or "Grand"

style, best represented by Raphael and Michael Angelo; (2) the "Ornamental" or "Splendid" style, typified in the ornate colouring of the Venetians; (3) the "Composite" style, or the style which combined the strength and simplicity of the "Grand" style with the rich colouring of the "Ornamental." If Reynolds is to be placed under either of these heads, it must be under the third. Always aiming at rich effects of colour, he never lost the charm of simplicity and harmony. As a colourist, indeed, he is supreme. Mr. Ruskin classes him¹ as one of the first seven colourists of the world—"Titian, Giorgione, Correggio, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Turner."

His ambitions were towards imaginative art. He would have loved to select subjects from the lofty themes of Christ's tragedy, the story of the Madonna, and the saints, or from classical mythology, that gave inspiration to the Florentines and Bolognese; but his powers and the demands of his generation led him into other fields. There is something pathetic in the wistfulness with which Reynolds over and over again seemed to yearn after the Grand Style in subject as well as in treatment. He applied the term "the Grand Style" to Painting exactly

¹ *The Two Paths*, Lecture II.

in the sense that Matthew Arnold has since tersely described it¹ in reference to Poetry. Arnold says of the Grand Style it "arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject." But the instinct that led Reynolds to portrait, and kept him at portraiture, however we define his style, was surely for him the unerring one. The religious motive of the earlier art no longer swayed the minds of men. If Raphael or Michael Angelo had been born in Protestant England in the eighteenth century, they would hardly have painted either Madonnas or saints. Such subjects were in reality incompatible alike with Reynolds's genius and with the spirit of his age. His mind naturally turned to the beautiful and graceful, rather than to the terrible and sublime. But the contemplation of the work of the Italian masters made portrait-painting seem almost trivial to him. He regarded it as merely the "sonnet or epigram" of art; his longings were towards the epic. Yet the only side on which he may be said to have failed was when he left the sonnet to essay the epic.

I have said that Reynolds's power lay in portraiture. His portraits of Johnson and

¹ Lectures "On Translating Homer."

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Heathfield will bear comparison with the best in art for character and virility. The grace of childhood, the loveliness of girlhood—what Goldsmith termed “the bloomy flush of life”—the infinite tenderness and charm of young motherhood with its children, and the autumnal beauty of old age, never found more adequate expression in art than he bestowed upon them. Mr. Ruskin says, “Considered as a painter of individuality in the human form and mind, I think him, even as it is, the prince of portrait-painters. Titian paints nobler pictures, and Vandyck had nobler subjects, but neither of them entered so subtly as Sir Joshua did into the minor varieties of human hearts and temper.”¹ Reynolds told Northcote with glee, and one can well believe it, “that lovers had acknowledged to him, after seeing his portraits of their mistresses, that the originals had appeared even still more lovely to them than before, by their excellencies being so distinctly portrayed.”

His name would have passed into the obscurity that shrouds Barry and Hayman and West, and a score of others, if he had denied the instinct that led him to portraiture. He made some essays into Historical and Religious

¹ *The Two Paths*, Lecture II.

painting, but they serve to mark his limitations. "Ugolino" is the least interesting of his work, and the replica of "The Death of Cardinal Beaufort" is thrust into a dark room where no eye sees it in the Dulwich Collection. Such subjects attracted him because he believed there could be no real renaissance of art in England without dignity of subject as well as style. And he had profound faith that such a renaissance was coming. A new and, as yet, hardly dreamed of perfection in painting were in his hopes. In his modesty he looked on his own work as child's play. Of the future of art he said to Northcote, "All we can now achieve will appear like children's work in comparison with what will be done." A century and a half of strenuous painting has hardly verified this prediction, but the modesty of it, considering the value of his own achievement, was characteristic of the man.

It is difficult to understand the tone of patronage and disparagement often adopted by the critics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century on portrait-painting. Some of the best work of the great masters had been in portraiture. Dürer, Van Eyck, Bellini, Moroni, Raphael, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Holbein, Rembrandt, Velas-

quez, Rubens, and Vandyck: with these Reynolds was in good company. Burke said that "Dr. Johnson neither understood nor desired to understand, anything of painting"; yet, languid as the Doctor's interest in art may have been, his critical instinct was true when he wrote of Reynolds's portraits: "I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and to goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead." Besides being a "thing of beauty," the true portrait is of infinite service to the historian, and to all who would realise what the men and women of a past generation were like. Carlyle, like Dr. Johnson, had little real sympathy with the æsthetic side of life, but he expresses a kindred idea with his wonted force. "In all my poor historical investigations," says he, "it has been, and always is, one of the most primary wants to procure a bodily likeness of the person inquired after, — a good portrait if such exists; failing that, even an indifferent if sincere one. In short, any representation made by a faithful human creature of that face and figure which he saw

with his eyes, and which I can never see with mine, is now valuable to me." In the portraits that came from Reynolds's easel between 1753 and 1789, we have mirrored the faces and characters of two generations, "and, in some instances, three," says Northcote, of beautiful women, of the leading statesmen, literary men, actors and actresses, and leaders generally of the then fashionable world. Powerful as the pen is in fit hands to bring back the life of the past, no pen can recall with the vividness and reality of Reynolds' magic touch the men and women of his generation as he presented them. It is fitting that among the many faces he painted he should not have been niggardly in depicting his own. We have fortunately many portraits of him from his own hand. Mr. Graves¹ says there are about a hundred of them. From these we can realise what manner of man he was from youth to middle age, and to his ripest maturity—for Reynolds never grew old.

¹ *Connoisseur*, October, 1901.

CHAPTER VI

AT GREAT NEWPORT STREET

Early success—His household—His sister, Frances, and Dr. Johnson—Reynolds at work—Sir George Beaumont's compliment—Horace Walpole's epigram.

FROM St. Martin's Lane Reynolds soon moved to 5, Great Newport Street, where he spent seven busy and prosperous years. It says much for the financial success of these years that at the end of that time (1760) he was able to buy the forty-seven years' lease of the house so closely connected with his later career, No. 47, Leicester Square (centre of west side); the lease cost him £1,650, and he spent on the house £1,500 in the erection of a studio and gallery, for his rapidly growing collection of Old Masters, with rooms for his assistants and pupils. His studio is still devoted to the service of the arts; it is now the meeting-place of the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club. The household consisted of Joshua and his younger sister, Frances, who

looked after domestic details for him until his nieces, the charming "Offy" and Mary, were old enough to relieve her of that duty. On taking possession of his house in Leicester Square, he not only gave a grand ball to a splendid company, but (according to Northcote) set up "a chariot, on the panels of which were curiously painted (by Catton) the four seasons of the year in allegorical figures." His servants were in liveries laced with silver. The painter was too modest to appear often in this magnificent carriage, and Miss Reynolds never felt really at home in it. But it used to carry Reynolds and his friends, Dr. Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, and Percy, and his nieces, and Hannah More, many a fine Sunday to Richmond, where, by-and-by, Reynolds purchased for himself a quiet retreat.

His sister remained with him until 1779, but it is evident from various accounts that she was difficult to live with. Fanny Burney describes her as irresolute, restless, and tiresome. Reynolds had a deep affection for her, but her fretful disposition in the face of petty grievances of her own making was a constant trial to him. When she finally left his house he made her a good allowance. She gained a warm place in Dr. Johnson's large heart.

His demands on her tea-pot were Gargantuan. She became his "dearest dear," and "Renny dear." When she preferred to sacrifice a box at the opera in order to enjoy his conversation, the gallant Doctor, bowing low, said, "And I, madam, would rather sit with you than sit upon a throne." She had some poetic, and considerable artistic gifts. Her art, however, was a trial to Reynolds. Northcote says that "nothing made Sir Joshua so mad as Miss Reynolds' portraits, which were an exact imitation of all his defects. Indeed she was obliged to keep them out of his way. He said, 'They make everybody else laugh, and me cry.'" She even tried her hand on Dr. Johnson's grand head. He rudely spoke of the portrait as his "grimly ghost." Her happiest efforts were in miniature. A beautiful profile portrait of her by Reynolds exists.

The period of Reynolds's residence in Newport Street is marked by an extraordinary and strenuous industry. He does not seem to have taken a single holiday while there. During the thirty-six years of his working life he painted over three thousand pictures; that is to say, more than sufficient, if all could be collected, to fill all the galleries at the Royal Academy, as we know them, twice over. Of

these, however, Mr. Graves¹ reckons that fourteen hundred are missing, or are unaccounted for. Many, no doubt, have perished by fire. At Belvoir Castle in 1816 a fine collection was thus destroyed. Many, alas! have "cracked" hopelessly, or have literally fallen from the canvas, by careless usage, or have been ruined by unskilful "cleaning." Many, doubtless, of the unaccounted for still lurk in the seclusion of country houses, their owners in many cases ignorant of their value; other owners have no particular inducement to trumpet the fact that they are the happy possessors of Sir Joshuas.

There are fewer failures probably from his hand than from any other artist whose work approximates the same scale of mere numbers. "I have heard him say," writes Northcote, "that whenever a new sitter came for a portrait, he always began it with the full determination to make it the best picture he had ever painted; neither would he allow it to be an excuse for his failure to say, 'the subject was a bad one for a picture'; there was always nature, he would observe, which, if well treated, was fully sufficient for the purpose." This ambition to make the present

¹ *Connoisseur*, October, 1901.

picture "the best he had ever painted" is the secret of his perennial freshness and charm; and this artistic conscientiousness lasted, if indeed it did not intensify, to the end of his career. His pocket-book entries record that in 1755 and 1760 he had about 120 sitters; in 1758, 150; and in 1759, 148. After 1760 the numbers diminished until latterly they averaged from 50 to 60. These figures bespeak an extraordinary industry. It means that in 1758-9 his portraits averaged about one in every two days. He generally had five or six, and in some cases as many as sixteen or eighteen sittings, or, indeed, as many as were necessary to satisfy himself with his work. Dr. Johnson tells us that one of his portraits was painted in two sittings. His masterpiece, "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," was painted in a week. Each sitter had an hour appointed, and after an hour and a half's work on that subject the picture was usually laid aside for a new sitter to take "the chair." He almost invariably painted direct from the model without preliminary "studies" or outline. Long practice gave him the facility and ease and delicacy in his work that Mr. Ruskin extolls. Reynolds once said, almost enviously, of Velasquez, "what we are all

attempting to do with great labour, he does at once."

To try to specify the best, or greatest, of Reynolds's works is very much as if one were to attempt in a garden of roses to point out the most beautiful. Each variety has its own peculiar beauty, and each blossom its individual charm. Like the roses, too, Reynolds's pictures suffer at the hands of time. It was a kindly saying and not inapt—attributed by different biographers to Gainsborough, Opie, and Sir George Beaumont—that "Reynolds's pictures in decay were better than the works of any other man at their best." Horace Walpole, with more acid in his criticism, suggested that Sir Joshua should be paid for his pictures by annuities—so long only as they lasted.

Yet, as the roses cannot well be specified, I would humbly suggest as prime favourites from the mass of his work the illustrations reproduced in this little volume. A complete list of his work is not here practicable, even if it was available. Students will consult the detailed list and notes of Messrs. Graves and Cronin, or the delightful pages of Leslie and Taylor. But the best idea of its scope, as a whole, will be found in the twelve massive

albums of engravings from his pictures treasured in the Print Room of the British Museum, which have supplied the material for illustration in these pages. An excellent impression can also be gathered from the valuable volumes of mezzo-tints published by S. W. Reynolds, and continued in three additional volumes of great interest and beauty by Messrs. Graves. The original paintings are scattered over the country, and too many have winged their way across the devouring Atlantic; they are not easy of access; beautiful specimens from time to time appear at the Winter Exhibitions at Burlington House, but it is time that the present younger generation had an opportunity of seeing a collection in which Reynolds would be fully represented. Though we have some excellent specimens of his work in the public galleries, notably in the National Gallery and in the Wallace Collection, I do not consider that on the whole Reynolds is adequately represented in our public galleries.

CHAPTER VII

AT WORK

Portraits of Keppel—Mrs. Bonfoy—Duchess of Hamilton—
The Portraits of Dr. Johnson—Horace Walpole—Lady
Waldegrave, afterwards Duchess of Gloucester—His
unpopularity at Court.

IT was appropriate and natural that the first portrait which established his reputation, painted in 1753, was that of his friend Captain (afterwards Admiral) Keppel, now in the possession of Lord Rosebery. One can easily understand how Reynolds, with Keppel's great kindness in his memory, and with his very genuine affection for the man, threw his whole heart into this undertaking. When Keppel was in command of the *Maidstone*, a fifty-gun ship, it became his duty to pursue a French frigate so close to the French coast that his own ship ran aground. By great energy and prompt action Keppel was able to save most of his crew. Reynolds has chosen the moment when Keppel, in naval uniform, is

stepping along the beach energetically giving his orders for the rescue of his men.¹ The picture is masterly in colour, and in management of light and shade. Leslie says it "would command attention among the finest Vandycks." Reynolds was so anxious to get this picture according to his ideal that, after several sittings from Keppel, he rubbed out all he had done, and repainted the picture. Keppel was a favourite subject for Reynolds's brush; there are at least nine portraits of him. One hangs in the National Gallery, and another in the National Portrait Gallery.

Lord Edgcumbe and Captain Keppel did much at the opening stage of Reynolds's career to recommend him to their aristocratic friends; though, perhaps, the merits of the first portrait was better than any personal recommendation. Shortly after we find him busy on the portraits of the Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Grafton. These were painted in simple, natural, yet dignified fashion, far removed from the conventional and wooden portraiture of the English style then prevalent. Portraiture had become a matter of measurements and draperies; Reynolds made it apparent that without inspiration these were of little avail.

¹ p. 50, E. Fisher.



HON. AUGUSTUS KEPPEL.

There followed (1754) an exquisite portrait of Mrs. Bonfoy, daughter of the first Lord Eliot, a Devonshire beauty; one of the first pictures to reveal his power of giving expression to the charm and grace of womanhood. Among the earlier portraits were those of Sir James and Lady Colebrooke, Sir George Colebrooke and his wife, Lord Godolphin, and Lady Anna Dawson as Diana.

The success of the portrait of Keppel brought people of the first rank to his studio. Two young peers, Lord Stormont (nephew of the great Lord Mansfield) and Lord Huntingdon, recently returned from "the grand tour," sat for their portraits, painted on one canvas. The merit of this picture induced the Home Secretary of the day, Lord Holderness, to sit for his portrait.

The whole-length portrait of the Duchess of Hamilton (the celebrated Miss E. Gunning), and of her sister the Countess of Coventry were painted at Newport Street in 1759. Reynolds delighted in painting these lovely sisters, whose beauty turned the heads of their generation. Lord Coventry sat in 1760. The Duchess of Hamilton sat again to Reynolds in 1764, and yet again—a charming picture—"in a red habit and hat, on horseback, with

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the Duke standing near her" (Leslie). Northcote sententiously remarks that "the desire to perpetuate the form of self-complacency crowded his painting-room with women who wished to be transmitted as angels, and with men who wanted to appear as heroes and philosophers. From Reynolds's pencil they were sure to be gratified."

Among the early sitters were two Scotchmen, Dr. Armstrong and Mr. Bower. Armstrong was a doctor practising in London, who had made some reputation by a didactic poem on the unpromising subject, "the art of preserving health." He was the centre of a literary circle, and was a personal friend of Reynolds's. Bower, an ex-priest of the Roman Church, had excited popular Protestant interest by his "revelations" of the inner life of the Vatican. In 1755 Reynolds painted a portrait of the wife of his friend John Wilkes. His friendship with Wilkes began while he was studying under Hudson, and survived all the strange vicissitudes of the demagogic patriot's varied career. With other names of the year, more or less distinguished, are—Lord Anson, the circumnavigator; the Duchess of Norfolk; and his Devonshire friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bastard, and Mr. and Mrs. Molesworth; Miss

Wynward, "as a Sibyl"; Lady Kildare, afterwards Duchess of Leinster, a lovely woman; Lord Monford; General Guise, a brave officer, noted in his day for "good yarns"; Lord Bath; Alderman Beckford (one of the members for London), whose seat at Fonthill was burned early in this year.

Of Reynolds's friends (and no man was ever richer) I propose to speak in later chapters. Here I merely record that in 1756 Dr. Johnson gave him his first sitting—a labour of love—for the fine portrait in which the great scholar is seated at a table, pen in hand, and books near him, an engraving of which appeared long afterwards in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The original picture Reynolds presented to Boswell. With the exceptions of Garrick and Keppel, none of Reynolds's male friends sat to him so often as Johnson. The strong, massive head, full of intellect and character; the unwieldy yet entirely appropriate figure had a fascination for him from the artistic standpoint apart from the deep affection he felt for the man. Johnson never was able to pay for a portrait, yet Reynolds painted him again and again. There are at least seven. We learn almost as much of Johnson's aspect and character from Reynolds's brush as we do

from the immortal pen-portrait of Boswell. The gifted pair, artist and biographer, have between them left pictures of Johnson that make him stand out more clearly in our mental vision than any man of the eighteenth century. In a later portrait (1770) Johnson appears without his wig, with raised hands. The portrait of 1773¹ indicates the sadness as well as power inherent in the great man's rugged face. It was painted for the Thrale Collection, and is now in the National Gallery. Another portrait, painted in 1758 for Malone, Johnson criticised with his wonted bluntness for its personality; he objected to being handed down to posterity holding a book close to his near-sighted eyes. Reynolds, again, as if by some curious association of ideas, while he was painting his "Infant Hercules," and the "Infant Jupiter," threw off a droll but happy picture of Samuel Johnson as he imagined he must have been in a state of happy two-year-old nudity—even at that early age visibly a babe of genius. Beautiful as this *tour-de-force* is in colour and in draughtsmanship, it is very doubtful if Johnson would have given it his approval.

It was probably in 1756, for there is some

¹ p. 140, Doughty.

uncertainty regarding the exact date, that Horace Walpole was in Reynolds's sitters' chair. McArdell's fine mezzo-tint (p. 56) enables us to realise the merits of the picture. A second portrait of Walpole, belonging to the Marquis of Hertford, was painted by Reynolds in 1757. A stroke of luck, in the way of commissions, for Reynolds and his assistants occurred in the same year. The young millionaire, Sir William Lowther, whom Reynolds met in Rome, and whose portrait he had painted, bequeathed £5,000 each to thirteen of his friends. The legatees, in gratitude to his memory, ordered copies of Reynolds's portrait of Sir William—a commission perhaps the nearest to the "pot-boiling" class of any that Reynolds ever undertook, if we except Boydell's commissions.

The first of the Marlborough pictures, that of the second Duke, was begun in 1757, but was never finished, the Duke being called away to Germany on military duties, where he died. Some eminent men, and many beautiful women, sat to him during the same year, among them Lord Charlemont (zealous in the advancement of English art, and one of his Roman acquaintances), Mr. Pelham (afterwards Lord Pelham), Lord North, Lord

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Dalkeith, and the Dukes of Ancaster and Somerset. Among the ladies were Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Bouverie, Lady C. Fox (afterwards Lady Holland), the Misses Morris, Lady Albemarle, Lady Betty Montagu (afterwards Duchess of Buccleuch), and Mrs. Cotterell, widow of Admiral Cotterell, in whose house Reynolds first had the happiness of being introduced to Dr. Johnson.

The years 1758-9 were the busiest of Reynolds's life. Three hundred portraits were painted in these two years. Among them appears Mrs. Horneck, a lovely Plymouth lady, and mother of "The Jessamy Bride" and "Little Comedy," beloved of Goldsmith. In describing this picture Mr. Taylor says, "She wears a lawn veil, from under which her hair flows down on one side; her arm, which supports her head, rests on a book. The likeness to her charming daughters is apparent."

The Countess Waldegrave, a niece of Horace Walpole's, one of the most beautiful women of her generation, was of the sitters at this period. She was one of his favourite subjects. There are four portraits of her from his brush. In the picture of 1759 she appears in the then fashionable turban. The second portrait (1762) presents her clasping her child, as Cupid, to



HORACE WALPOLE

her bosom. Mother and child are alike lovely. In 1764 he depicted her as a widow, black veil over her head, leaning her head upon her hand, and pensively looking upwards. His latest portrait of her was painted after she became the Duchess of Gloucester.

The Prince of Wales, afterwards George III., sat in 1758, and the Duke of Cumberland of Culloden fame. The latter sat for several portraits at a later period. It is not without interest to note in the portraits of Cumberland the gradual decadence of character delicately but veraciously indicated, the refined but commonplace features of the young man gradually degenerating into the coarse and sensual double-chinned face of the man of pleasure. It may here be said that though Reynolds, after his appointment to the President's Chair of the Royal Academy, painted a portrait of George III. in royal robes, in a style that should have been gratifying to His Majesty, for he subdued all the weakness and magnified all the strength in the features of that eccentric monarch, Reynolds was never *persona grata* at Court. His studio was neutral ground in politics; leaders of both sexes, of the Court party as well as the Whigs, were to be met there. It is not improbable,

however, that his intimacy with John Wilkes and Burke, and his sympathy with the Whig section generally were observed, and may account for the prejudice that appears to have existed against him at Court. With all his gentleness and courtesy Reynolds was not the man to try to bring himself into royal notice, either by flattery or by indirect influence.

CHAPTER VIII

HIS METHODS AND PRACTICE

Development of his style—His kindness to art students—His studio described—The famous sitters' chair—Dr. Beattie's, Mason's, and Beechey's description of Reynolds at work—His experiments—On light and shade—His prices.

VARIOUS contemporaries, including Northcote, Beattie, and Mason, and, later, Beechey and Leslie, have left interesting memoranda as to Reynolds's methods and practice. To the lover of Reynolds's work even minute details of his working life are of interest. Writing of the variations perceptible in his style, C. R. Leslie, R.A., after a careful study of the mass of his work, notes that the earlier pictures, from 1753 to 1765, are "carefully and smoothly painted, with no great body of colour, and are in good preservation," where "the cleaner" has been kept at bay. From 1765 to 1770 Leslie notes that Reynolds indulged in "risky" experiments, in wax and

varnishes, in search of the secret for giving durability to fugitive tints, with frequently disastrous results to the work of that period. After 1770 "his colour became more heavily impasted," but experience was proving to him the need of being more conservative in his use of mediums. Leslie observes a marked advance of power in his work from 1781, after his wanderings among the Flemish and Dutch galleries. Twenty years before that, however (1761), he had painted the masterpiece, "Garrick between , Tragedy and Comedy," and in 1773 the "Three Ladies decorating the Term of Hymen" and "The Strawberry Girl."

Northcote records that "Reynolds never was so happy as in those hours which he passed in his painting-room." He was wont to say that "he will never make a painter who looks for the Sunday with pleasure as an idle day." The need for strenuous industry in a young painter was constantly on his lips. To Barry he wrote, "Whoever is resolved to excel in painting . . . must bring all his mind to bear upon that one object from the moment he rises till he goes to bed." It was Reynolds's custom to receive students in his studio in the morning before beginning his work. He criticised the work

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they brought for this purpose, offered suggestions, and lent them his pictures freely to copy.

Northcote thus describes Reynolds's painting-room. It was of "octagonal form, about twenty feet long and about sixteen in breadth. The window which gave the light to this room was square, and not much larger than one half the size of a common window in a private house, whilst the lower part of this window was nine feet four inches from the floor." Sir George Reid, in his admirable article on "Painting" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says, "The size and altitude of the window is of great importance," and has had considerable influence "in determining not only the effects in the works of individual artists, but the characteristics of whole schools." If the window is small "the light and shade on the model will be broad and intense, and the colouring sombre, especially in the shadows. If abundance of light is admitted, the tendency will be more towards brightness and purity."

The famous "sitters' chair" used by Reynolds was raised eighteen inches from the floor, and turned round on castors. The original chair—in it sat at various times all who gave lustre to the latter half of the eighteenth century—is now carefully preserved under a glass

case in the "gift-room" of the neglected but profoundly interesting Diploma Gallery at Burlington House. The venerable chair, in its faded and worn brown leather, is still in good condition. The handles of his brushes (or "pencils," as they were called in his time) were long, measuring about nineteen inches. He painted, Northcote tells us, "in that part of the room nearest to the window, and never sat down when he worked."

Dr. Beattie¹ writes: "I sat to him five hours, in which time he finished my head and sketched out the rest of my figure. The likeness is most striking, and the execution most masterly. . . . Though I sat five hours I was not in the least fatigued, for, by placing a large mirror opposite to my face, Sir Joshua put it in my power to see every stroke of his pencil; and I was greatly entertained to observe the progress of the work, and the easy and masterly manner of the artist, which differs as much from that of all other painters I have seen at work as the execution of Giardini on the violin differs from that of a common fiddler." Leslie, from this description, generalises that it was Reynolds's practice to paint from the reflection in the glass rather than from the model; but there is no

¹ *Diary*, August 16th, 1773.

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evidence that the mirror was used except to correct faults in drawing that might arise from too close and prolonged a study of the subject itself.

Mason describes him at work thus: "On his light-coloured canvas he had already laid a ground of white, where he meant to place the head, and which was still wet. He had nothing upon his palette but flake-white, lake, and black; and, without making any previous sketch or outline, he began with much celerity to scumble these pigments together till he had produced, in less than an hour, a likeness sufficiently intelligible, yet withal, as might be expected, cold and pallid to the last degree. At the second sitting he added, I believe, to the three other colours a little Naples yellow; but I do not remember that he used any vermilion, neither then nor at the third trial; . . . lake alone might produce the carnation required. However this be, the portrait turned out a striking likeness, and the attitude . . . perfectly natural and peculiar to his person, which at all times bespoke a fashioned gentleman."

Reynolds objected to the use of vermilion in flesh-tints. Northcote one day urged on him the use of vermilion for the sake of durability, instead of the more brilliant but fleeting lakes

and carmines. Reynolds, looking on his hand, said, "I can see no vermilion in flesh." Northcote responded, "But did not Sir Godfrey Kneller always use vermilion?" "What signifies what a man used who could not colour? But you may use it if you will," retorted Reynolds. In his later work, however, under the stress of seeing his transparent colours fade like roses in autumn, he was reluctantly compelled to use the opaque but more durable colours. For many years he experimented in colour to find if possible the secret—"the Venetian secret"—by which durability could be combined with the brilliancy of nature. His experiments ruined many canvases. To Northcote he once despairingly said, "There is not a man now on earth who has the least notion of colouring. We all of us have it equally to seek for and find out, as at present it is totally lost to the art." He even analysed some valuable paintings by Venetian masters, bought for the purpose, in the hope of discovering the composition of their grounds, and to trace the progress of laying on colour; in short, to find the secret of their durability. Though it is true that many of his pictures have suffered from his passion for experiment, the great mass of his work, where it has

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escaped the ravages of the picture-cleaner, or where it has been properly protected from the effects of artificial light and heat, and dust and dirt, retains its original loveliness, and it "mellows" rather than fades. The experiments were the outcome of his thirst for excellence. He was willing to risk in order to gain. In a sense he was working in the interest of the whole craft. It remains for a later generation to see whether the manufactured pigments of to-day will retain their freshness and brilliance a hundred years hence.

A note of Beechey's (quoted by Leslie and Taylor, vol. i. p. 376) throws light on Reynolds's method of laying on colour, and on the causes of the danger when his pictures fall into the hands of unskilful cleaners. "His vehicle" (*i.e.* the fluid used for bringing the pigments into a proper working state) "was oil or balsam of copaiba. His colours were only black, ultramarine, and white, so that he finished his picture entirely in black and white, all but glazing" (*i.e.* the laying on of transparent colours allowing the work beneath to show through, but tinged with the glaze); "no red or yellow till the last, which was used in glazing, and that was mixed with Venice turpentine (the resin of the larch) and wax as a

varnish. Take off that, and the pictures return to black and white." If this is a true description the moral would appear to be that possessors of "Sir Joshuas" should (1) have them covered with glass to protect them from gas-fumes, and fire-heat, and dust, as Mr. Ruskin strongly urged for the protection of all valuable pictures; and (2) should exercise the utmost care, if cleaning, or repairing, is an absolute necessity, that the pictures are placed in competent and conscientious hands for the purpose.

A luminous note by Reynolds on "Light and Shade," founded on his own practice while studying the Venetian masters, must be quoted. "The method I took to avail myself of their principles was this:—when I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject, or to the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give their conduct in the management of the lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike. The general practice

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appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights ; another quarter to be kept as dark as possible ; and the remaining half to be kept in mezzo-tint or half shadow. Rubens appears to have admitted rather more light than a quarter, and Rembrandt much less, scarcely an eighth ; by this conduct Rembrandt's light is extremely brilliant, but it costs too much ; the rest of the picture is sacrificed to this one object. That light will certainly appear the brightest which is surrounded with the greatest quantity of shade, supposing equal skill in the artist."

The secret of Reynolds's influence on us in no way depends on the methods by which he obtained mastery. The beautiful results interest us more than the means by which they were gained ; yet all that relates to his working life, even in minute details, are of interest, and for young students may be profitable.

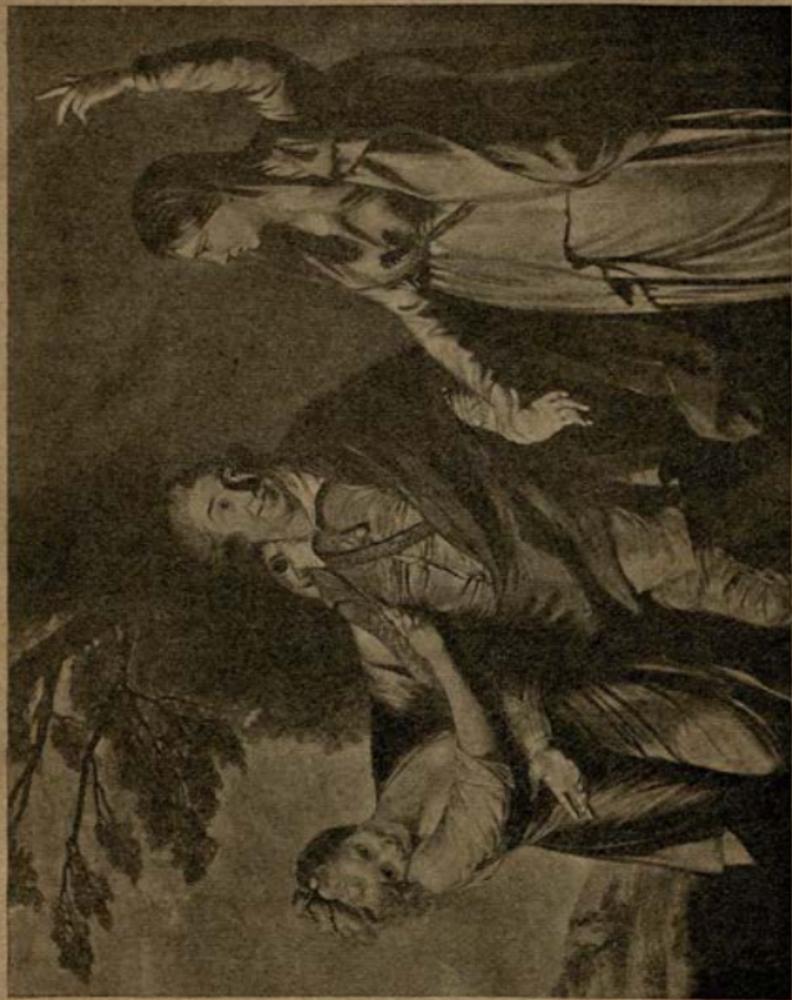
A word may be said before closing this chapter as to the prices charged by Reynolds for portraits at the various stages of his career. Before starting for Italy he received from three to five guineas for a portrait. On his establishment in London in 1753, he raised his prices to a level with Hudson's, viz. :—

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For a head	.	.	.	12 guineas
„ half-length	.	.	.	24 „
„ whole-length	.	.	.	48 „

A year or two later his terms rose to fifteen, thirty, and sixty guineas. In 1759 he charged twenty guineas "a head." In 1764 he charged thirty guineas for a head, with sums rising to one hundred and fifty guineas for a whole-length; half of these amounts being payable at the first sitting. For special pictures, however, he received exceptional prices. For "The Infant Hercules," for instance, Sir Joshua received from the Empress of Russia, for whom it was painted, fifteen hundred guineas; and on receiving the first volume of his Discourses she sent him "a gold snuff-box, adorned with her profile in bas-relief, set in diamonds." For "The Nativity," Sir Joshua's study in oils for the central panel in New College window, Oxford, the Duke of Rutland paid the artist £1,200. For the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," probably the worst picture ever painted by Reynolds, he received from Alderman Boydell five hundred guineas.

Leslie records that for many years after his settlement in London Sir Joshua's income exceeded £6,000 a year. ❀



GARRICK BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

CHAPTER IX

IN THE STUDIO

Portraits of David Garrick—Kitty Fisher—His social engagements—First public exhibition by living English artists—His personal kindness.

REYNOLDS'S brush was never more happily employed than when the leading actors and actresses, and beautiful "ladies of the town" sat to him. His dear friend, David Garrick, he painted seven times, the first of the series in 1759; and in all of them he enables us to understand, with far more vividness than is possible in any verbal description, how it was that Garrick fascinated his generation. Perhaps in none do we get a more vivid idea of the complexity of the actor's genius than in the masterpiece, belonging to Lord Rothschild, "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy" (1761-2)¹. Another charming picture (1772) of Garrick and his wife seated in their Hampton garden,

¹ See p. 68, E. Fisher.

painted on one canvas, is full of vigour and beauty. There is also a lovely sketch of Mrs. Garrick painted early in their acquaintance. The magnificent portrait of Garrick in brown coat and lace ruffles—the man not the actor—looking straight out on us with bright, kindly face, full of vitality, was painted in 1776 for the Thrale Collection, and is now in the possession of the Duke of Bedford.¹ Topham Beauclerk, Reynolds's brilliant comrade at "The Club," was so delighted with the Thrale portraits of Garrick and Johnson that he induced Reynolds to paint copies of them for his collection.

Reynolds also produced portraits of Garrick's brother actors—Barry, the ideal stage lover, and Woodward, the irresistible comedian of his day. The portraits are full of vivacity and character.

Another favourite sitter of this period was the high-spirited beauty Kitty Fisher. Before her marriage with Mr. Norris, son of the Member for Rye, she held sway over a wide aristocratic circle in London. The gossiping biographies of the time tell weird tales of her. Reynolds has immortalised her in seven portraits. The Petworth portrait presents her, in

¹ See p. 148, T. Watson.

pearl necklace and pearl earrings, resting her arms on a table, hands folded, with an open letter before her, dated "1759, June 2," beginning, "My dearest Life,"—then a judicious fold of the paper!¹ In another famous picture she sat for "Cleopatra dissolving a pearl"—Miss Kitty had a weakness for pearls. The fine portrait of her seated with a dove in her lap, another hovering in the background, has been frequently reproduced. In an unfinished sketch of great beauty she wears a "fly-cap"; in the Lansdowne portrait she appears in profile, carrying a parrot on her forefinger. She was introduced to Reynolds by his friend Keppel, and besides sitting for her portrait, she seems to have frequently obliged the artist by sitting for hands and neck in pictures of more distinguished sitters.

In 1759 Reynolds painted a "Venus," one of the few studies of the nude that left his easel. Venus reclines in a wood, and Cupid peeps at her through the boughs. The picture, though of rich colour—reminiscent of Titian—cannot be classed with Reynolds's best work. Mason records that the head for this picture was painted from the daughter of Reynolds's manservant, Ralph Kirkby, a beautiful girl of

¹ p. 72, E. Fisher.

sixteen. It became the property of Lord Coventry.

Fully occupied as Reynolds must have been with his brush, it was this year that he contributed three short papers, on sudden emergency, in Johnson's paper, *The Idler*, Nos. 76, 79, and 82. I refer to them in a later chapter. That he was busy also socially can be gathered from his note-books. He records many visits to clubs, card parties, "a dance at 'The Crown and Anchor,'" and dinners with the beautiful Lady Coventry, Lord Edgcumbe, John Wilkes, his brother artist Allan Ramsay, and the Head Master of Westminster, whose portrait he painted; besides which he received much and distinguished company at his own table, Johnson being one of his most frequent guests.

The first Public Exhibition of Living English Artists was held at the Society of Arts in 1760, the last year of Reynolds's residence in Newport Street. Reynolds sent four pictures, one a whole-length of Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton (the renowned Elizabeth Gunning), and another, a three-quarter length, of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, the beautiful sister of his friend the Commodore. Lady Elizabeth appears in a robe of silvery white, with a rose in her bosom.



KITTY FISHER

The personal kindness of Reynolds is well illustrated by an incident of this period told by Northcote, and repeated by most of Reynolds's biographers. It is only one of numerous instances, but it is characteristic of the man. A son of his old friend Dr. Mudge, of Plymouth, a clerk in the Navy Office, was prevented by illness from going home on his sixteenth birthday, much to the disappointment of all concerned. "Never mind, *I* will send you to your father," said Reynolds, who forthwith painted a portrait of the youth, peeping from behind a curtain, and sent the birthday gift to the boy's father. Considering the enormous pressure of work at this period, the act reveals real kindness of heart. Very characteristic, also, at a later time, was that offer to young Raeburn, who fortunately did not require help, to advance the means to aid him to study in Italy, so forcibly was Reynolds struck by the specimens of the young Scottish painter's talents submitted to him.

In the summer of 1760 Reynolds moved from Newport Street, and took up his residence at No. 47, Leicester Square, his home for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER X

IN LEICESTER SQUARE

Hard at work—Portraits of Captain Orme, Lord Ligonier, Sterne, Hon. Mrs. Bouverie and child, the royal bridesmaids, Nelly O'Brien—Reynolds and Dr. Johnson take a holiday in Devonshire—Northcote's introduction—Mrs. Abington—Founding of "The Club"—Hogarth's death—Reynolds joins the Dilettanti Society—Visits Paris with Richard Burke.

THE new decade, also the beginning of George III.'s reign, found Reynolds hard at work. Despite the interruption of moving his quarters, he records one hundred and twenty sitters for the year. To the second Public Exhibition of Associated Artists he sent three pictures, one being the important picture of Captain Orme with his horse, now prominent in the corridor of the National Gallery. Companion to it, in the same corridor, is the large canvas of Lord Ligonier, in which Reynolds was not so happily inspired. Full of character and intellectual power, however, is the great portrait of Sterne, painted this year. Face



HON. MRS. BOUVERIE AND CHILD



LADY S. BUNBURY, LADY S. STRANGWAYS, AND C. J. FOX

and figure are alike characteristic. Two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* had appeared when Sterne sat to Reynolds. Of Reynolds Sterne wrote after the sittings, with true insight of the artist: "That man's way of thinking and manners are at least equal to his pencil." Of a different order is the lovely picture, now at Delapre Abbey, full of tender beauty and charm, the Hon. Mrs. Bouverie and her child.¹ Another famous picture was begun this year, three figures on one canvas, the interesting subjects being Lady Sarah Bunbury (on whom the King had turned admiring eyes), Lady Susan Strangways, and the youthful Charles James Fox. Lady Sarah, who during the year acted as one of the royal bridesmaids, leans from a window towards a dove, which Lady Susan holds, while Fox looks on. Though this picture—now in the hands of the Earl of Ilchester—cannot be placed with the best of Reynolds's work, it certainly ranks high.² The royal marriage crowded Reynolds's studio with beauties, craving for immortality. Two others of the royal bridesmaids were of the number. Besides Lady Sarah Bunbury came Lady Elizabeth Keppel, of "the rose-tipped ears," in her state dress of exquisite colour, depicted as

¹ p. 74, J. Watson.

² p. 74, J. Watson.

decorating Hymen with flowers (a favourite "fancy" of Reynolds), while a negress, skilfully introduced as a foil, holds up the wreaths. The third bridesmaid, Lady Caroline Russell, he painted in a magnificent blue robe, ermine trimmed, over a white satin vest, with her spaniel on her knee. With these came Lady Pembroke, Lady Spencer, and so many others that their names even cannot find a place here.

Among the subjects of the year, however, there is one that cannot be omitted, the bewitching Nelly O'Brien. She shares the distinction with Kitty Fisher and Mrs. Abington of having been one of Reynolds's most favourite subjects. There are many studies of her from his brush. Perhaps the best-known portrait is the charming one, now in the Wallace Collection, in which she sits beaming under the shade of her Woffington hat, petting a spaniel in her lap—a delightful picture. In another she appears in profile, her cheek resting on her hand. Again, she sits, in sober brown dress, with expression of sweet innocence in her lovely eyes, and leans forward with clasped hands.¹

Reynolds was busy socially as well as

¹ p. 76, J. Watson.



NELLY O'BRIEN

professionally during these years, but no event added more to his happiness than his introduction, about 1760, to a kindred spirit, Oliver Goldsmith. The friendship then formed developed into close intimacy, and was interrupted only by death. Of this friendship I enter into more detail in a later chapter.

In the autumn of 1762 Reynolds made his first and much needed break in work. For nine years he had been continuously in his studio without taking any real holiday. One can imagine the delight with which he, and Dr. Johnson as his companion, shook London dust from their feet, and started for some weeks' junketing in Devonshire. They visited Winchester, Salisbury, Wilton, Exeter, Torrington (the home of two of Reynolds's married sisters), Plympton, and Plymouth. Wherever they went they were received with hospitality and kindness, and both men enjoyed the holiday vastly. An episode of the tour was the introduction of young Northcote to Reynolds; a meeting that influenced all Northcote's after career, and, incidentally, was the means of giving posterity the best "first-hand" view of Reynolds's life which we possess.

By the end of September Reynolds was back in his studio, refreshed in body and mind, and

again hard at work. The Duke of Bedford, the Provost of Eton, and Lord Bute take their turn in the studio-chair; among the ladies of fashion are Lady Bolingbroke, the Ladies Henrietta and Elizabeth Montague, and the King's eldest sister, the Princess Augusta, who in 1764 married the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick. Lady Mary Coke and Lady Pembroke are followed by Lady Rockingham and the Duchess of Richmond.

Reynolds's first portrait of Mrs. Abington, the enchanting, capricious, and wilful actress who plagued poor Garrick so, but was adored by the town, was painted in 1764. In her Reynolds found a subject after his own heart. Of a singular beauty, not so much of shapely feature as of joyous expression and unique individuality, Reynolds never tired of painting her. She in her turn was never tired of sitting to one who expressed the attractive, if sometimes saucy and coy, beauty of her face more truly than her mirror, with the added charm of permanence. There are at least five portraits of her—"The Comic Muse," now at Knole;¹ "Roxalana"; "Miss Prue"—leaning on the back of her chair gazing mischievously at the spectator, with her thumb at her lips; "Lady

¹ p. 78, J. Wilson.



MRS. ABINGTON AS THE COMIC MUSE

Teazle" (she must have made an ideal Lady Teazle); and a half-length in which she appears with powdered hair, in white satin "cardinal." On the stage she was a special favourite of Reynolds. He always contrived to bring a strong contingent from the clubs to her "benefits."

The years 1764-5 were chiefly remarkable, so far as they concerned Reynolds, for the formation of "The Club," at which he spent many a happy hour in the society of congenial spirits; and for the brief, though dangerous, illness that overtook him. To both of these events, merely noted here, reference is made in a later chapter. His great contemporary, Hogarth, died in the year 1764. Beyond the fact that both men were devoting the work of their lives to the enhancement of English art there was no friendship, and, apparently, little sympathy between the men. The two most important pictures on Reynolds's easel were portraits: (1) "Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces." Lady Sarah is portrayed in a kneeling attitude before a flaming tripod, and pours a libation before the graces. The rich colouring has suffered at the touch of time, but the picture is among the best of his allegorical subjects. (2) The

second was the fine portrait of Count Lippe-Schaumbourg, now in the Royal Collection, one of the most powerful of his military portraits.

He was elected a member of the Dilettanti Society in 1766, much to his gratification; he was proposed by his friend Lord Charlemont; and for many years he was one of the most regular of the members at the Society's famous Sunday dinners. A particularly lovely picture of this year was that of the two Misses Horneck, girls of fourteen and sixteen, known as Goldsmith's "Little Comedy" and "The Jessamy Bride." The lovely sisters are painted on one canvas, and the picture, which is unfinished, is of exquisite drawing and delicate colour.

Foote, the actor; Sir John Cust, the Speaker; and Reynolds's old friend, Dr. Mudge of Plymouth, are of the sitters in 1767. The last is a grand head, one of the noblest of Reynolds's men's portraits. Chantrey said, when Dr. Mudge sat as his model, that he found, if the bas-relief was properly placed, the light fell on the face, and on the band and gown, exactly on the marble as in the picture. The most important of the portraits of ladies painted this year were Lady Mary Fox and Miss Morris.



MISS JESSIE CHOLMONDELEY CARRYING A DOG ACROSS A BROOK

In 1768 he exhibited the bewitching picture of Miss Jessie Cholmondeley (a niece of Peg Woffington's) carrying a dog across a brook—one of his happiest inspirations.¹ The original belongs to Mrs. Thwaites.

In the autumn of this year Reynolds, accompanied by Richard Burke (the younger brother of Edmund Burke), made a trip to Paris. They visited the galleries, the studios, and the picture dealers; saw their friends, and went to the opera, and enjoyed a good time generally. Reynolds returned to find that much valuable work had been done in his absence by his brother artists towards the organisation of the long-desired Royal Academy.

Reynolds's career was so linked with the progress of the Royal Academy for the first twenty years of its existence that I must digress a little to touch on its origin and work, at the same time giving some account of the relationship of Reynolds with his brother artists. The story of the growth of the Royal Academy from its infancy is told in great detail by Leslie and Taylor.

¹ p. 80, Marchi.

CHAPTER XI

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

Reynolds becomes its first President—Art-teaching in England before founding of R.A. — Kneller's and Thornhill's schools—Life school at Peter Hyde's—The Dilettanti Society—The Incorporated Society of Artists—Its dissensions—Founding of the Royal Academy—Reynolds knighted—His influence on the Academy.

THE position of Reynolds in the English world of Art in 1768, when the Royal Academy was placed on a permanent basis, can best be gauged by the fact that he was at once unanimously elected by his brother artists to be its first President. His recognised artistic powers, his social qualities and position, alike pointed him out as the most fitting head to any institution whose object was the national advancement of Art.

The teaching of Art in England before the foundation of the Royal Academy was for the most part carried on in the individual studios of painters who took premiums from pupils. Here and there small schools or

private academies for the teaching of drawing dragged on a casual and badly organised existence. In 1711 Sir Godfrey Kneller, with the help of a few artists, formed a school for the tuition of drawing. In 1724 Sir James Thornhill gave opportunities to young painters in his house in the Piazza, Covent Garden. In 1734 a life school was formed at Peter Hyde's house in Greyhound Court, Arundel Street, under Moser, whose name, at a later time, became prominent at the Royal Academy. In 1739⁴ this school received an accession of strength by attracting to it Hogarth, Wills, and Ellis, and moved its quarters to St. Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane. These schools never paid their way, and were maintained by subscriptions from the needy artists who gave their services to them, and by the scanty fees which the students too often could ill afford to pay.

In 1753 Reynolds, McArdell, Nollekens, and other artists became interested in its work. It is significant that the first serious attempt to found a public Academy for the improvement of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in England should have been made in London ten months after Reynolds established himself there. A meeting was

summoned by circular among artists, and others interested in Art, to be held at the "Turk's Head," Greek Street, Soho, for November 13th, 1753, to frame a constitution, elect members, decide upon subscriptions, erect a building, and arrange plans as to the instruction of students. The secretary acting for the artists in this attempt was Mr. Newton, afterwards the first secretary of the Royal Academy. Young as Reynolds then was (he was thirty), his name stands high on the list of Committee of Management. But the time was not yet ripe. The attempt failed.

Reynolds, however, brought the subject forcibly before the Dilettanti Society, whose *raison d'être* was its interest in the Arts, and among whose members he had many influential friends, one being his old friend Lord Edgcumbe. The Society had discussed the feasibility of forming an Academy five years before without attempting to carry it into execution. In 1755 a powerful paper was communicated to the Society by a body of artists, the paper being inspired by Reynolds, in which a strong plea was made for the encouragement of English Art, and calling on the members of the Dilettanti to join them in founding a Public Academy, which would be a school not in name only but

in reality. A far-reaching and definite plan, with a skeleton charter, was set before the Society. The plan proposed was very much what, at a later time, was realised in the Royal Academy Schools. It included¹ "working from casts and from the life; collection of examples; professors; lectures; instruction in drawing from the model; the presentation of one of his works to the Academy by every professor" (the beginning of our undervalued Diploma Gallery); "annual medals; travelling fellowships." It included also "a national school of design, professorships of ornamental and other branches of study inferior to that of the figure; the appointment, under the seal of the Academy, of masters for provincial schools of design; the purchase of specimens of tasteful and elegant manufactures; and giving premiums for such productions; and last, but not least, an Annual Exhibition of Pictures, Statues, Models, and Architectural designs by the Fellows of the Academy." The artists who took part in this excellent scheme may be regarded as the pioneers of national Art in England.

The scheme was rendered abortive by the egotistical and absurd conditions proposed by

¹ Leslie and Taylor, vol. i. p. 134.

the Dilettanti Society as the price of its support. Its suggestion was (1) that the president of the new Academy should be always chosen from the Dilettanti Society; and (2) that all the members of the Dilettanti Society be members of the Academy. The artists, sensibly enough, showed no eagerness to let their Academy be swamped by non-professional patrons; and so the matter seems to have dropped.

Reynolds, however, was in frequent conference with his brother painters. In 1757 the St. Peter's Court School moved to Pall Mall. The Society of Arts took the practical and encouraging step of giving liberal premiums for pictures, and lent a large room in the Strand for a public exhibition of pictures by living artists. The first public exhibition, the artists not being as yet formally organised, took place on 21st April, 1760. It proved so successful that a second was held in a room in Spring Gardens. The catalogue of the third exhibition, in 1762, was, through the influence of Reynolds, distinguished by a preface from the hand of Dr. Johnson, and the artists had so far "caught on" that they claimed a shilling for admittance and sixpence for the catalogue.

The associated artists exhibiting at Spring Gardens, in 1765, became incorporated by Royal Charter as "The Society of Artists of Great Britain," with president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, directors, and fellows. The Incorporated Society from its beginning was unfortunately torn asunder by dissensions between its directors and fellows—quarrels very distasteful to Reynolds. He withdrew from its meetings, and soon ceased to contribute to its exhibitions. Many of the more eminent artists of the day followed his example.

It was during the visit of Reynolds to Paris, alluded to in the preceding chapter, that the outline of the constitution of the Academy, on the model of the scheme formerly submitted to the Dilettanti Society, was presented in person to the King by Sir William Chambers. Reynolds, whose known Whiggish sympathies shut him out from Court favour, studiously kept in the background. The King fortunately was not only amenable, but warmly approved the scheme. Thirty names of artists, including that of Reynolds, were submitted to the King, with a list of officers. The artists in assembly, as I have said, unanimously selected Reynolds as their first president. The King gave his

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sanction; Reynolds was knighted — “his name seemed to be made for the knightly addition,” said the friendly Burke;—and the first general meeting of the Royal Academy, as we know it, under the presidency of Reynolds, was held on the 14th December, 1768. Sir Joshua was then in his forty-fifth year.

The young Academy was at first located in Pall Mall, at Dalton's print-warehouse, next to Old Carlton House. In 1771 the schools were moved to Old Somerset House, but the exhibitions continued at Pall Mall until the new buildings at Somerset House were finished in 1780.

To Reynolds it was a matter of profound satisfaction to find a practical, working school of art established on a firm and solid basis under royal patronage. He devoted himself heart and soul, in a spirit of willing and even glad self-sacrifice, to its advancement. The preparation of the fifteen famous Discourses, delivered at intervals during the next twenty years to the students and friends of the Academy, in the midst of other professional work, must have made great inroads on his time and thought. For over twenty years he rarely allowed social engagements, or private

work, to interfere with what he conceived to be his duties to the Academy. He and his brother academicians practically became its schoolmasters ; and his labours at the exhibitions were unremitting, to place them on a footing worthy of the new Academy. He showed an example, which some of his successors did not always follow, of placing his own work at the exhibitions "in inferior positions in order" (as Leslie expresses it) "that other exhibitors might be reconciled to their necessary lot."

It was at his suggestion that distinguished men were brought into honorary office in the Academy, Dr. Johnson as Professor of Ancient Literature, and Dr. Goldsmith as Professor of Ancient History. He also placed our English hall-mark on the young institution by inaugurating the annual Academy Dinner.

CHAPTER XII

BROTHER ARTISTS

Gainsborough — His relations to Reynolds — Reynolds's friendly advances not responded to — Gainsborough's unfinished portrait of Reynolds — His illness — Reconciliation with Gainsborough — Proposal to decorate interior of St. Paul's — Set aside by bigotry of Bishop of London — Collision with brother Academicians — Resignation of President's chair — Resignation withdrawn.

HIS official position as President of the Academy brought him into closer relations with his brother artists. For most part his relations with them were cordial and harmonious. His note-books contain many references to dinners with Hayman, Penny, Chambers, Hudson, Ramsay, and many others.

With Gainsborough, his great rival, however, he was never able—through no fault of Reynolds's—to establish friendly relations. In character, in training, and in manners they presented a curious contrast. Critics have too often, according to their bias, felt it necessary to decry the art of the one if they praised the

other. Nothing could be more futile, or, indeed, more vulgar. English Art could ill have spared either. "Do you prefer Sir Joshua to Gainsborough?" is as idle a question as if one were asked, "Do you prefer a Camille de Rohan to a Gloire de Dijon?" The garden is richer for both. When it has been said that Gainsborough in certain pictures displayed greater force, and that Reynolds displayed more refinement and grace, only half a truth has been spoken; they both had force, and both had refinement. They pursued their ideals in different ways, but the ideals of both were always high.

But in character the men, apart from their art, were of wholly different types. Reynolds was a gentleman by birth, training, and temperament. If half the stories told of Gainsborough are true he appears to have been "touchy" and blunt of speech. He took little pains to conceal a certain dislike of Reynolds. When Gainsborough settled in London in 1774, Reynolds courteously called on him; but the visit was not returned. Whether there existed mutual jealousies or not, they were each fully alive to the power of the other. The rivalry put both men on their mettle. "Damn him, how various he is!" said Gainsborough of

Reynolds at one of the exhibitions. "I cannot think how he produces his effects!" said Reynolds, lost in admiration before a picture of Gainsborough's. Reynolds's admiration was not confined to ejaculations. When Gainsborough exhibited his "Girl and Pigs," Sir Joshua bought it for sixty guineas; on receiving, later, a hundred guineas for his purchase, he sent the additional forty guineas to Gainsborough.

Reynolds was a warm admirer of Gainsborough's landscapes. On one occasion, at the Artists' Club, he enthusiastically said to a group of his friends, "Gainsborough is certainly the first landscape painter now in Europe." Wilson, the landscapist, unluckily being present, wincing, exclaimed, "Well, Sir Joshua, and it is my opinion that he is also the greatest portrait painter at this time in Europe." It is evident that Wilson's taste was not on a level with his artistic powers. Sir Joshua instantly apologised for making such a generalisation in Wilson's presence. It is a misfortune that Gainsborough never finished the portrait for which Sir Joshua gave him a sitting. It would have had an historical as well as an artistic interest. After the first sitting Reynolds had a dangerous illness, and had to

proceed to Bath for convalescence. On his recovery, although he made overtures to Gainsborough regarding the portrait, it was never resumed or finished.

At the last, however, better relations were established. On his death-bed, in 1788, Gainsborough wrote to Reynolds "to express" (as Reynolds tells the story in his fourteenth Discourse) "his acknowledgments for the good opinion I entertained of his abilities, and the manner in which, he had been informed, I always spoke of him; and desired he might see me once more before he died." Reynolds visited him. In that final interview the curtain that separated the two great souls was raised; all jealousies vanished, and all misunderstanding passed away. The farewell to Art was to Gainsborough as great a trial as his farewell to life. "And Vandyck will be of the company," he said, referring to the *Beyond*, in that last interview. Reynolds was one of the pall-bearers as Gainsborough was carried to his last resting-place in the churchyard of Kew.

Reynolds had an ambition, for the sake of beautifying London and for fitly utilising the talent embodied in the still youthful Academy, to link the Academy with public decorative work. In 1773 he proposed that an attempt

should be made to introduce pictures and sculpture into St. Paul's Cathedral, and the scheme included the decoration of the Dome. The suggestion was hailed by his fellow-Academicians with enthusiasm. Sir Joshua, West, Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffmann were selected by the Academy to carry out the scheme, and the Society of Arts nominated four artists to co-operate with the Academicians. The Dean of St. Paul's, the Archbishop, the Lord Mayor, and the King heartily approved, and there seemed every prospect that it would be carried out. But the Bishop of London (Dr. Terrick), on the matter being referred to him, peremptorily wrote to the Dean, "Whilst I live, and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the Metropolitan Church to be opened for the introduction of Popery." Unfortunately Dr. Terrick had "the power" as well as the bigotry, and the scheme came to naught. Whether the result, if the artists had carried their point, would have been æsthetically successful may be open to question; but the attitude of the Bishop was a bitter disappointment to Reynolds, who was as little likely to minister to Popery as the Evangelical Bishop himself.

The practical and useful work of the Academy was soon in full swing. For nearly a generation, as I have said, Reynolds was indefatigable in its Council, at the schools, and at the exhibitions. He presided at the annual dinners, and was mainly the means of attracting to their dinner-table the most distinguished men of the time. In a separate chapter I deal with the Discourses which he delivered from time to time to the students. It is pathetic that the only real misunderstanding that arose between him and his colleagues occurred when blindness and infirmity were coming upon him. Whether the blame—if any—lay with him or with the Academicians, it is not easy to decide: but no one can read the account of the strained relations that arose, happily of no long duration, without marvelling that one who had devoted the best years of an illustrious life to the interests of the Academy, and who had done so much to add to its lustre, could have been treated in such brusque fashion by its members, even if, in his age, he revealed, on a matter of detail, an unexpected obstinacy. The misunderstanding arose on the appointment of a Professor of Perspective. It is needless to enter into minute particulars.

These will be found fully detailed in Leslie and Taylor's admirable biography. Suffice it to say here that the candidate of Reynolds's choice for the chair was not *persona grata* to the Academicians. They declined, as they had a right to do, but with some personal rudeness, as Reynolds imagined, to appoint his candidate to the vacant chair, whereupon Reynolds resigned the presidency and his seat as Academician.

Deputations from the Academy, however, waited on Sir Joshua, and, after mutual explanations, the misunderstanding passed, and Sir Joshua returned to the presidential chair.



CHAPTER XIII

REYNOLDS AS ART CRITIC—THE DISCOURSES

The cosmopolitanism of Art—Reynolds on “the dignity of the painter’s calling”—Edmund Burke’s comment—The Discourses—Their European influence—Summary of first seven Discourses.

THE moods and points of view of art critics vary as rapidly and, apparently, with as little reason as other fashions, whether in painting or in costume. “That which pleases one generation offends the next. The “realists” to-day hold the field; to-morrow it is the turn of the “idealists.” But why the realist should despise the idealist, or the idealist contemn the realist; is not so evident. The cosmopolitan world of art has fortunately all along yielded temperaments that excel in revealing Nature’s beauty now with literal fidelity and frankness, and again in the glow of the poet’s imagination, regardless of the differences of the schools. And the critics write as the painters paint. Reynolds leaned to the poet’s view.

His Discourses, prepared for the instruction and encouragement of Royal Academy students, attracted a much wider audience. Some of the most eminent men of his time attended them, and as the first seven Discourses appeared in volume form they attracted European attention. They were translated into French and Italian. The Discourses were never intended to enter into minute details in the teaching of painting. The school was the place for these. His aim was to rouse and stimulate attention to the intellectual claims of Art, to form a sound taste, and to guard the students against those errors into which the sanguine temper common to their time of life has a tendency to lead them. Considering that twenty years passed between the first and last Discourses, it is wonderful to find such consistency of thought running through them all; and the enthusiasm for art is as marked in the last as in the first.

Reynolds upheld the dignity of the painter's calling. He says, "Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great and what is little, brings home knowledge from the East and

from the West ; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality and variety of invention." Edmund Burke's comment on hearing this read was, "This is indeed excellent ; nobody can mend it ; no man could say it better." Northcote tells us that the deafness of Reynolds, and his dislike of even the semblance of affectation, led him into a certain lameness of elocution that failed to do them full justice. The occasion of their delivery was generally the distribution of prizes to the students of the Royal Academy.

In the first Discourse (January 2nd, 1769) he deals with the advantages that proceed from the institution of a Royal Academy ; on the need of implicit obedience to the rules of the art by all young students, whatever freedom they may claim when mastery has been attained. Two important warnings are given, as applicable to the student to-day as they were in Reynolds's time : "It is natural for students to be more captivated with what is brilliant than with what is solid, and to prefer splendid negligence to painful and humiliating exactness. A facility in composing ~~is~~ a lively, and what is called a masterly handling of the chalk or pencil are, it must be confessed, captivating

qualities to young minds, and become, of course, the objects of their ambition. They endeavour to imitate these dazzling excellencies, which they will find no great labour in attaining. After much time spent in these frivolous pursuits, the difficulty will be to retreat; but it will be then too late; and there is scarce an instance of return to scrupulous labour after the mind has been debauched and deceived by this fallacious mastery." The second warning is of the absolute necessity of always drawing "exactly from the living models which they have before them;" and avoiding the temptation to draw "what they think the figure ought to be, rather than what it appears."

The second Discourse (December 11th, 1769) modestly begins by saying that his own mistakes in the pursuit of excellence may help to prevent their industry from being misapplied. Assuming that the rudiments of painting have been acquired, he divides the study into three periods: (1) Drawing, modelling, and using colours constitute the grammar of art. (2) The necessity of "amassing a stock of ideas," to be combined and varied as occasion may require. "All that has been known and done before his own

time," has to be studied for the regulating of taste, and the enlarging of imagination. (3) With mastery of his materials, and familiarity with the world's best work, the disciplined student reaches emancipation "from subjection to any authority but what he shall judge to be supported by reason." His imagination may use its wings. Men who fail to study the works of the masters are generally "apt to overrate their own abilities; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast new to him, for a new-found country." Instead of wasting time in "copying," which he regards as tending to mere imitation, and destructive of originality, he urges, "You cannot do better than have recourse to Nature herself, who is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble." On "style," he says: "Style in painting is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions and sentiments are conveyed." But there are no "short-cuts" to greatness. "If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed

labour; nothing is to be obtained without it."

The third (December 14th, 1770) and fourth (December 10th, 1771) deal with the leading principles of what he terms "the Grand Style." He expounds his favourite theory, which has been often criticised, that "perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas." He deprecates too rigorous an attention to detail. "In portraits the grace, and, we may add, the likeness, consist more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature. . . . The great end of art is to strike the imagination." The cartoons of Raphael are cited in illustration of this thesis. As to colour, "a quietness and simplicity must reign over the whole work; to which a breadth of uniform and simple colour will very much contribute. Grandeur of effect is produced by two different ways, which seem entirely opposed to each other. One is, by reducing the colours to little more than *chiaro-oscuro*, which was often the practice of the Bolognian schools; and the other, by making the colours very distinct and forcible, such as we see in those of Rome and Florence; but still, the presiding principle of both these manners is

simplicity." The Roman, the Florentine, the Bolognese schools he terms "the three great schools of the world in the Epic style": the Venetian, Flemish, and Dutch schools he ranks considerably lower, though "they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted." The noble conceptions and the learning of Michael Angelo, and the simplicity of Raphael are contrasted with the capricious composition, violent contrasts of colour, and of lights and shadows, and inattention to expression that characterise the Venetians. From this generalisation he excludes Titian, whose portraits he admired for the "nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them." He warns the students not to be carried away by the florid, if splendid, style of Paolo Veronese and Tintoret, whom he held responsible for a style merely ornamental having been disseminated throughout all Europe.

Portrait-painting Reynolds regards as "the humbler walk of the painter's profession." In "historical painting," to which he gives the higher place, he notes three distinct styles: (1) "the Grand Style"; (2) "the Splendid or Ornamental Style"; (3) "the Composite Style," of which he takes Correggio to be

the type. Correggio's style "is founded upon modern grace and elegance, to which is superadded something of the simplicity of the Grand Style." The Discourse concludes by saying that work "built upon general nature lives for ever"; work based on particular customs and habit, or which merely records fluctuations of fashion, finds speedy oblivion.

In the fifth Discourse (December 10th, 1772) he maintains that the depicting of passion is incompatible with beauty. Even the most beautiful faces, under the influence of passion, become distorted and deformed. "Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none." He proceeds to particulars as to the Grand Style, basing his criticism on the frescoes and cartoons of Michael Angelo and Raphael. Raphael's easel-work he puts on a lower plane than his frescoes. Michael Angelo, he considers, concentrated chiefly on "correctness of form, and energy of character; the graces and embellishments held subordinate places; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are a superior order of beings." Raphael added to the energy of Michael Angelo "the beauty and simplicity of the Antique. Raphael had a greater combination of the higher qualities of the art than any

other man." Reynolds then proceeds to consider the subordinate styles, the characteristic styles of individual painters, instancing Salvator Rosa, Carlo Maratti, Rubens, and Poussin.

The sixth Discourse (December 10th, 1774); treats of the true place of "imitation" and "invention" in art; and of the ethics of "borrowing." "Invention is one of the great marks of genius: but, if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think." He calls upon students of art to habituate the mind to the contemplation of excellence. "Michael Angelo and Raphael were equally possessed of all the knowledge in the art which had been discovered in the work of their predecessors." Imitation must not be understood to mean "an endeavour to copy the exact peculiar colour and complexion of another man's mind," but "to impregnate our minds with kindred ideas" to those of the Masters in Art. He dwells on the influence of Pietro Perugino, and afterwards of Leonardo da Vinci on Raphael; "it is from his having taken so many models that he became himself a model for all succeeding painters; always imitating,

and always original." "Infuse into your works what you learn from the contemplation of the works of others." But when all is said of the influence of other minds on the artist it has to be constantly remembered that "Nature is, and must be, the fountain which alone is inexhaustible; and from which all excellencies must originally flow."

The seventh Discourse (December 10th, 1776), is a plea for wide culture in the artist. Industry of the mind rather than of the hands is inculcated. A painter must know more "than is to be picked off his palette, or collected by looking on his model. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate." The society of intellectual men, of good books, of great pictures, create and educate taste. In this Discourse Reynolds defends "Allegorical Painting." He says: "If it produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts, but fixes the attention."

CHAPTER XIV

THE DISCOURSES—*continued*

Summary of the Discourses from viii. to xv.—Sir Joshua's pen—Contributions to *The Idler*—Tour to Flanders—Notes to Mason's *Translations of Du Fresnoy*—Reynolds's Johnsonese.

IN the eighth Discourse (December 10th, 1778) the value of simplicity in Art is again insisted upon: not ostentatious simplicity, which becomes affectation, but restraint in the use of ornament. Rules, however, he says, have authority, like that of nurses, chiefly while the artist is in a state of childhood.

In this Discourse occurs the famous passage which Gainsborough so effectively criticised by the production of "The Blue Boy." "It ought," says Sir Joshua, "to be indispensably observed, that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm, mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish white; and that the blue, the grey, or the green colours be kept almost

entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours; and for this purpose a small proportion of cold colours will be sufficient."

The ninth Discourse (October 16th, 1780) is chiefly congratulatory on the Academy's establishment at Somerset House. He dwells, in general terms, on the true aim of Art being towards perfection. "The mind of the artist is continually labouring to advance, step by step, through successive gradations of excellence, towards perfection, which is dimly seen, at a great though not hopeless distance, and which we must always follow because we never can attain; but the pursuit rewards itself; one truth teaches another, and our store is always increasing, though Nature can never be exhausted."

The tenth Discourse (December 11th, 1781) is devoted to a consideration of "form and character" in sculpture; he considers how far the principles that regulate the sculptor's art agree or differ from those of painting.

In the eleventh Discourse (December 10th, 1782), and in the twelfth (December 10th, 1784), he discusses the nature of "genius" in painting. "Whatever sublime ideas may fill the artist's mind, he is a Painter only as he

can put in practice what he knows, and communicate those ideas by visible representation." In painting there is a genius of mechanical performance. "This genius consists, I conceive, in the power of expressing that which employs your pencil, whatever it may be, as a whole." He again takes as a type Raphael's cartoons. These are not minutely "finished." "His principal care and attention seem to have been fixed upon the adjustment of the whole, whether it was the general composition, or the composition of each individual figure; for every figure may be said to be a lesser whole, though in regard to the general work to which it belongs, it is but a part." He proceeds to compare Raphael's methods with those of Titian. Speaking of portrait-painting, he says that its excellence, even in likeness and character, "depend more upon the general effect produced by the Painter than in the exact expression of the peculiarities or minute discrimination of the parts."

In the thirteenth Discourse (December 11th, 1786) he again emphasises that painting, like the sister arts, "address themselves primarily and principally to the imagination. . . . The higher efforts of the arts . . . do not affect minds wholly uncultivated. Refined taste is

the consequence of education and habit. . . . Poetry sets out with a language in the highest degree artificial, a construction of measured words, such as never is, nor ever was used by man." It deviates from Nature. The painter, like the poet and musician, follows Nature, or varies it, and sometimes departs from it. "The object of all the arts is to supply the natural imperfection of things, and often to gratify the mind by realising and embodying what never existed but in the imagination." Art addresses itself, not to the gross senses, "but to the desires of the mind, to that spark of divinity which we have within, impatient of being circumscribed and pent up by the world which is about us."

The fourteenth Discourse (December 10th, 1788) contains a fine and, under all the circumstances, a generous tribute to Gainsborough, recently deceased—"one of the greatest ornaments of our Academy." He says: "For my own part, I confess, I take more interest in, and am more captivated with, the powerful impression of nature which Gainsborough exhibited in his portraits and in his landscapes, and the interesting simplicity and elegance of his little, ordinary beggar children, than with any of the works of the recent Italian School."

Genius in a lower rank of art is preferable to feebleness and insipidity in the highest. He notes the intense love of art that characterised Gainsborough, "to which, indeed, his whole mind appears to have been devoted, and to which everything was referred." Gainsborough's passion, he says, was not "the acquirement of riches, but excellence in his art." Gainsborough, he points out, studied Vandyck and Rubens; from whom he learned harmony in colouring, the management and disposition of light and shadow, and every means which the masters of it practised to ornament and give splendour to their works. "What he thus learned he applied to the originals of nature, which he saw with his own eyes, and imitated, not in the manner of those masters, but in his own. . . . His genre was not academical or antique, but selected by himself from the great school of Nature."

In the fifteenth, and last, Discourse (December 10th, 1790) Sir Joshua takes his farewell of the Academy. He pleads infirmity and the weight of years. The pencil and palette being his natural tools, he modestly excuses himself if in adequate language he has not been able to express his ideas on the principles of art with sufficient skill. Yet, "I had seen much,

and I had thought much upon what I had seen." He again commends the students to an earnest study of Michael Angelo; he suggests that every figure of their first picture should be painted from figures invented by him. "Your taste will by this means be naturally initiated and nursed in the lap of grandeur." He concludes his Discourses in these noble words: "It will not, I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to appear in the train, I cannot say of Michael Angelo's imitators, but of his admirers. I have taken another course, one more suited to my abilities and to the taste of the times in which I live. Yet, however unequal I feel myself to that attempt, were I now to begin the world again, I would tread in the steps of that great master. To kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man.

"I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations, as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy and from this place might be the name of—Michael Angelo."

Northcote relates that Edmund Burke, as Reynolds left the president's chair, at the close of this Discourse, stepped forward, and, grasping his hand, repeated the lines of Milton—

“The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear.”

Ten years before the first Discourse was delivered, Reynolds contributed three short papers to *The Idler* at Dr. Johnson's request.¹ In them he anticipates much of what is said more vigorously in the Discourses. He points out that slavery to rule, and a “servile attention to minute exactness” are inconsistent with higher excellence. He gives expression to his favourite ideas that painting, like poetry, has power only as it appeals to the imagination; that the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal nature are the marks of the great schools of painting, and must characterise all art-work which is to occupy a permanent place in men's thoughts. Michael Angelo he describes as “the Homer of Painting.”

On his return from a tour to Flanders and Holland, in 1781, accompanied by his friend Mr. Metcalfe, he published his notes of their

¹ Nos. 76, 79, 82, *Idler*, 1759.

journey, with detailed criticisms of the masterpieces of the Flemish and Dutch schools. He returned with a much greater respect for Rembrandt, and for Rubens, than when he started. Indeed his own colouring, after this journey, it has been noted, acquired a richer hue, most probably from the influence of his study of Rubens.

When Mason published his metrical translation of Du Fresnoy's didactic "poem" on the Art of Painting, Sir Joshua annotated it with many practical and valuable Notes from his point of view. To the painter and critic alike the Notes are full of interest; they throw light on his own methods and views of the work-a-day side of Art.

He contributed, also, some luminous Notes to Johnson's edition of Shakespeare. There also exist two graphic and humorous papers written in excellent Johnsonese to illustrate the conversational manner of his old friend. They were written before Boswell's *Life* was published, but were not printed by Reynolds's niece, the Marchioness of Thomond, until 1816.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE STUDIO—*continued*

First exhibition of the R.A.—Portrait of Burke—Reynolds and Garrick become “bail” for Baretti at the Old Bailey—Portrait of Goldsmith—Mrs. Abington as Miss Prue, and “Offy” reading *Clarissa*—Sir Joseph Banks—Mrs. Crewe as Geneviève—Reynolds elected Mayor of Plympton—His niece “Offy” Palmer joins Reynolds’s household—His children subjects, and “fancy subjects.”

PERHAPS more than enough has been said to indicate the scope of Reynolds’s pen; but no true idea of his influence in art is possible without consideration of the stream of ideas which he contributed to art. His work at the Academy is only less useful than his work in the studio. I now return to his work at the easel.

To the first exhibition of the Royal Academy (1769) Reynolds sent four canvases. (1) The Duchess of Manchester; (2) Mrs. Blake (3) Miss Morris; (4) Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe on one canvas. The first three are treated allegorically. The Duchess of Manchester

stoops, as Diana, to disarm the sleeping Cupid. Miss Morris as "Hope nursing Love," is a charming picture of delicate beauty. Mrs. Crewe, whose lovely face is on the same canvas with Mrs. Bouverie, was, two years later, painted by Reynolds in the beautiful picture "St. Geneviève reading amid her flock."

Edmund Burke sat for his portrait in 1769. The portrait is simple and characteristic. Though interesting it cannot be regarded as one of his great portraits. The statesman sits in light plum-coloured coat, a strong face of unmistakable Irish cast, but without that distinction that Reynolds contrived to impart to men of much lower mental calibre.¹

About the time that Burke was sitting for the portrait, he and Reynolds and Garrick attended the Old Bailey, and became bail for their impulsive Italian friend, Baretti, who was on his trial for murder. Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith accompanied them to speak to Baretti's character. It is not often that such a group has appeared in such a place; but the incident proves that the friendships of the eighteenth century were not merely the camaraderie of club life. At any rate they could bear stern testing. Baretti was acquitted.

¹ See p. 147, James Watson.

He became foreign secretary to the Royal Academy; and, by Johnson's influence, he became resident tutor to the Thrale family. A very fine portrait of Baretti was painted by Sir Joshua in 1774. It is one of Reynolds's most characteristic heads.

To the exhibition of 1770 Reynolds sent eight pictures; with others were Lord Sidney and Colonel Acland as archers; Lady Cornwallis; the "children in the wood" (they are feeding each other with blackberries); and portraits of his friends Johnson, Goldsmith, and Colman. The portrait of Goldsmith, now in the collection of the Duke of Bedford, is of great and special interest. Few artists would voluntarily have chosen his head for a subject. Reynolds's love for the man endowed it with a pathetic attractiveness. The face is not beautiful. Goldsmith's friends used to say he looked like "journeyman tailor," but Reynolds brings out of commonplace features the humorous and lovable qualities of the man with direct, unflattering, and simple force.¹

In the autumn Reynolds journeyed again to Devon. In 1771 he painted a portrait of Mrs. Baddeley, the beautiful actress. She is charmingly portrayed caressing a cat that plays with

¹ See p. 142, Marchi.

a tress of her hair. Another beautiful woman, Mrs. Horton (sister of Colonel Lutterell of Dunster), who afterwards became the Duchess of Cumberland, was among his sitters of this year. Walpole, describing her, says: "She had the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long." To the exhibition Sir Joshua sent six pictures, two gems being of their number—Mrs. Abington as Miss Prue, and "Offy" absorbed in *Clarissa*. In the autumn, after his return from a visit to Paris, he produced the vigorous portrait of Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks. It displays the wonderful gift seen in so many of his portraits, as Leslie well expresses it, of "grasping with unfailing skill the dominant characteristic of his subject."

He was busy also at the Johnson picture for the Thrale Collection; at the fine picture of David Garrick and his wife in the garden, already alluded to; and the lovely Duchess of Buccleuch with her baby boy. Friends also from the West Country were having their portraits painted—Mr. Dunning, the barrister, with his daughter; and Mrs. Buller from King's Nympton.

To the exhibition of 1772 he sent six pictures, the most notable of them being Miss Meyer



THE STRAWBERRY GIRL

as Hebe and Mrs. Crewe as St. Geneviève. Hebe is depicted as moving up a pathway of rainbow, an eagle leading the way. The lovely Mrs. Crewe sits reading, surrounded by her sheep. Among other portraits, of the year there is one of Macpherson of Ossianic renown.

Rather to Sir Joshua's surprise, his fellow-townsmen of Plympton elected him an alderman, and in the following year he became Mayor of Plympton. This honour "in his own country" was highly appreciated by Sir Joshua. On his election to the mayorate he visited Plympton, and he marked his sense of the honour conferred on him by sending his portrait to the Town Hall. When the portrait came to be hung, Leslie says that Sir William Elford suggested it should be placed between "two old paintings which will serve as a foil." The two "old paintings" proved to be early paintings from Reynolds's brush!

After the visit to Plympton in the autumn of 1770 Sir Joshua brought back his niece (his widowed sister's daughter), "Offy" Palmer, then thirteen years of age, to live with him in London. Three years later, as has been said, she was joined by her elder sister, Mary Palmer. Offy's charming face is familiar to all lovers of Reynolds. She often sat for pictures of

“fancy” subjects. Perhaps the most popular, as it is the most winning, is “The Strawberry Girl” (1773), in the Lansdowne Collection. There is a replica in the Wallace Gallery. They are perfect gems of their kind.¹ Another delightful picture in which she appears is “Offy reading *Clarissa*.” Between 1770 and 1777 Sir Joshua devoted much time to the painting of children. No painter ever more effectively caught the charm and simplicity of childhood. It was a favourite maxim of his that all the gestures of childhood are graceful, and that distortion begins with the dancing-school. Mr. Stephens’s delightful essay on “Reynolds’s Children” (Remington) deals with this side of Reynolds’s art. “Cupid as Link-boy” and “Cupid as Mercury” (1771) are full of a certain droll and fanciful beauty of vulgar life without a hint of vulgarity in treatment. “Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast accounts,” and “a nymph squeezing clusters of grapes into the mouth of a baby Bacchus,” belong to the same year.

In rapid succession during, and after, 1773 came “The Strawberry Girl,” to which I have referred; “Muscipula,” a girl with a mouse-trap—not so happily inspired either in subject

¹ p. 118, T. Watson.



MASTER CREWE AS HENRY VIII

or draughtsmanship; "Robinetta," feeding a bird on her shoulder—familiar to every visitor of the National Gallery; "Boy with Cabbagenets"; "St. John," now in the Wallace Gallery; "Master Cox as Hannibal"; "The Infant Jupiter"; the irresistible "Miss Bowles hugging a dog," also in the Wallace Gallery; and "The Snake in the Grass, or Love unbinding the Zone of Beauty," now in the National Gallery. There are three replicas. In drawing and colour, with a certain quaint and humorous grace, none of them surpasses the portrait belonging to the Earl of Crew, of "Master Crewe as Henry VIII.,"¹ in which the boy stands among his spaniels, thumbs in girdle, and legs apart (1776). Of the same year are "Master Herbert as Bacchus"; "The Sleeping Child"; and "A Fortune Teller," a clever picture of Lady Charlotte Spencer reading her brother's hand, the boy in Vandyck dress; and "A Boy Reading." Another charming study of similar mood (Mr. Ruskin calls it Sir Joshua's "indolent" mood) is the portrait of Elizabeth Beauclerk as Una seated, a lion at her side, in a wooded landscape. In 1786 he produced "A Child with Guardian Angels," a picture, though now

¹ p. 120, J. Raphael Smith.

somewhat faded in colour, full of harmony and repose. It was to be seen at the recent exhibition of eighteenth-century pictures at the Guildhall. In the following year (1787) was exhibited the oft-repeated and universal favourite, now in the National Gallery, "Heads of Angels," painted from the sweet face of Frances Isabella, daughter of Lord William Gordon. A year or two later, in connection with Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, he painted the quaint and jovial "Robin Goodfellow"; and the lovely "Cupid and Psyche"¹ now in the possession of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. In similar mood was painted the charming picture entitled "Love."² The last of the "fancy" subjects came from his brush in 1789, "Cymon and Iphigenia." This picture was presented to George IV., after the death of Sir Joshua, by his niece, the Marchioness of Thomond. Iphigenia, almost nude, lies asleep on the grass: Cupid leads Cymon towards her. Although it may be true, as Mr. Ruskin says, that in choosing such subjects as "Puck," "Mercury as a Thief," or "Cupid as a Link-boy," Reynolds "yielded momentarily to

¹ p. 122, W. Say.² p. 122, W. Say.



CUPID AND PSYCHE



LOVE

indolent imagination," yet these "fancy subjects," the by-products of his leisure, as they may be called, are by no means the least interesting of Reynolds's work.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE STUDIO—*continued*

Access of power—"The Three Graces"—Ruskin's eulogy—"The Strawberry Girl"—"Ugolino in the Dungeon"—"Lady Cockburn and her Children"; its reception at the Academy—Portraits for the Thrale Collection—Visits the Naval Review—Romney in London: his appreciation of Reynolds—Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia—Duchess of Devonshire—The Uffizi portrait—The Dilettanti Groups—Marlborough portraits.

A MARKED accession of power is visible in Sir Joshua's work of 1773, though critics seem agreed that he did not touch his "high-water" mark for some years later. This year saw begun the noble picture, now in the National Gallery, of the three lovely daughters of Sir William Montgomery, who were about to be married, one to the Hon. Luke Gardener (afterwards Lord Mountjoy), another to Viscount Townsend, and the third to the Hon. John Beresford. The picture was exhibited the following year as "Three Ladies decorating



THREE LADIES DECORATING THE TERM OF HYMEN

the Term of Hymen.”¹ They are the embodiment of Irish grace and beauty. On receiving the commission to paint the picture Sir Joshua wrote thus to the Hon. Luke Gardener : “ I have every inducement to exert myself on this occasion, both from the confidence you have placed in me and from the subjects you have presented to me, which are such as I am never likely to meet with again as long as I live ; and I flatter myself that, however inferior the picture ~~may~~ be to what I wish it, or what it ought, it will be the best picture I ever painted.” The result did not belie Sir Joshua’s promise. Mr. Ruskin, in lyrical mood, writing of this picture says :² “ The three maidens are less substantial than rose petals. No flushed nor frosted tissue that ever faded in night wind is so tender as they ; no hue may reach, no line measure, what is in them so gracious and so fair.” With perhaps the exception of “ Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy,” no more masterly picture had as yet left Reynolds’s easel.

This was also the year of “ The Strawberry Girl,” already alluded to ; the winsome actress,

¹ p. 124, T. Watson.

² *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1860.

Mrs. Hartley carrying her boy on her shoulder as an infant Bacchus; and one of Reynolds's ambitious and questionable attempts at historical painting, "Count Ugolino and his children in the Dungeon." In criticising the latter picture Leslie says: "The whole arrangement, whether of form or colour, of light or shade, is the best possible," it "leaves nothing to be desired—except that it had never been painted." The subject had been lying dormant in Reynolds's mind from the early days in which he pored over Jonathan Richardson. He put an immense amount of work in this picture, but the subject is hardly of the kind that lends itself to the painter's art.

To this year also belongs the much discussed portrait of his friend Dr. Beattie, author of the *Essay on Truth*, the picture which brought upon the artist Goldsmith's dignified rebuke for introducing parodies of the heads of Voltaire and Hume. Whatever may be thought of the allegorical heads introduced into the picture, the portrait of Beattie himself is full of character and dignity.

He had also begun the fascinating group of "Lady Cockburn and her Children," now in the possession of Alfred Beit, Esq., one of his masterpieces of gracious motherhood and



LADY COCKBURN AND HER CHILDREN

divine childhood.¹ That it has made some approach to the ideal at which he aimed is indicated by the fact that he printed his name in full on the fringe of her robe, as he did, later, in his portrait of Mrs. Siddons as "The Tragic Muse." When "Lady Cockburn" was brought to the Academy, the artists present clapped their hands.

"Mrs. Tollemache as Miranda" was on his easel at the same period. Besides these he was working on the portraits for the Thrale Collection, Lyttleton (afterwards Lord Westcote), Lord Sandys, Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Murphy, Robert Chambers, and Baretta.

It was a year of great and rich productiveness; but Reynolds found leisure to join Lord Edgcumbe's flagship in June to see the great Naval Review of that year; and in July he proceeded to Oxford, with no small satisfaction, to receive from the University the honorary degree of D.C.L. He extended his visit to Blenheim and Nuneham.

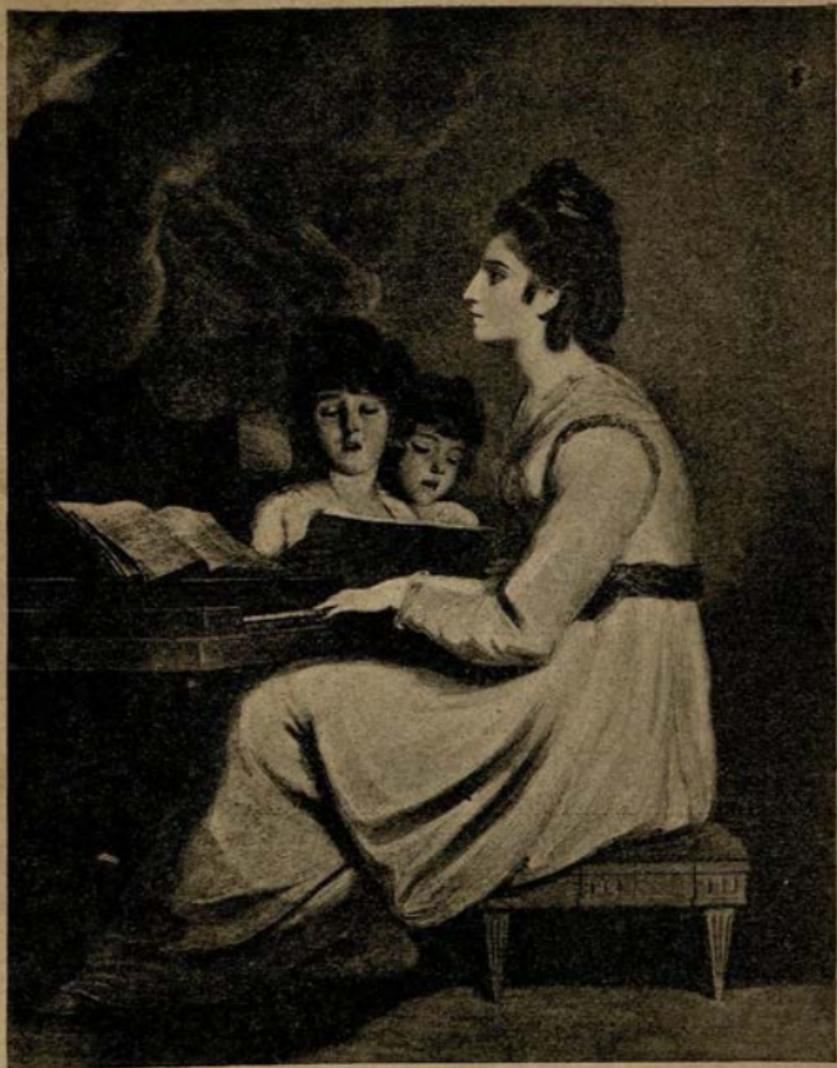
In the summer of 1774 Gainsborough came from Bath and settled in Pall Mall, not far from Reynolds, but with little disposition, as we have seen, to cultivate the friendship of his most formidable rival. He was followed,

¹ p. 126, Wilkins.

next year, by another painter of genius, fresh from Italy, where he had culled much honey from the great masters—Romney. Reynolds had no reason to fear competition with the younger men. But they no doubt divided with him the attention of the fashionable world. There was a “Reynolds faction” and a “Romney faction.” Romney, however, had no share in the feelings of jealousy that Gainsborough took little pains to conceal. Northcote relates that when one of Romney’s friends, thinking to please him, criticised Reynolds unfavourably, Romney exclaimed, “No, no; he is the greatest painter that ever lived, for I see in his pictures an exquisite charm which I see in Nature, but in no other pictures.”

The year’s work (1774) did not show such productiveness as the last. Among his sitters are Lady Betty Hamilton (afterwards Lady Stanley), Miss Boswell, Dean Barnard and his wife, Mr. Mason, Edmund Malone, the President of the Royal Society, Lady Tyrconnel, and others of lesser note.

Next year (1775) he produced the exquisite picture, now in the collection of Lord Iveagh, for which the lovely young wife of R. B. Sheridan (the famous singer, Miss Linley) sat



MRS. SHERIDAN AS ST. CECILIA



LADY CHARLES SPENCER

as St. Cecilia. She sits at the organ, clad in white and gold, attended by angels. It would seem as if Reynolds had been under the spell and inspiration of music when he held the brushes.¹ Of a different order, but painted with great power, is "The Otaheitan Omiah," in his turban and white robe, a "lion" of the London season, who is presented to the King, fêted in Society, and dines at Mrs. Thrale's with Dr. Johnson and Reynolds and Lord Mulgrave. Dr. Robinson, the Primate of Ireland, and the Duke of Leinster and his beautiful duchess—of which picture Burke said: "It is impossible to add anything to its advantage"—are also of this year. His own portrait; in which he holds his ear-trumpet, and another of himself for the Dilettanti Society, also the portrait in which Dr. Johnson holds a book close to his eyes, and portraits of Lord Temple and Mr. Thrale are on his easel. Perhaps the most attractive pictures of the year, however, are the portraits of Mary, Lady Charles Spencer petting her favourite horse² (in the collection of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild) and that of Madame Schindelin, a German singer of great beauty.

¹ p. 128, W. Dickinson.

² p. 128, W. Dickinson.

To the exhibition in 1776 he sent twelve pictures. Of these were Lord Althorpe, in Vandyck dress, book in hand, leaning on a pedestal; Lord Temple; the Duke of Devonshire; Master Crewe as Henry VIII. (already referred to); and the delightfully characteristic portrait of David Garrick seated, with thumbs pressed together, in friendliest attitude, ready for conversation.

A delightful portrait of this year, belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, is that of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, a prominent figure in the fashionable world, of whom Walpole writes: "Her youth, figure, glowing good-nature, sense, lively modesty, and modest familiarity make her a phenomenon." He painted a second portrait of her, not less charming, in which she is amusing herself with her sweet young daughter, Lady Georgiana Cavendish.¹ The ten years that elapsed between the painting of these pictures (the latter belongs to 1786) had in no way diminished the sprightliness and charm of the lovely Duchess.

To 1776 belongs also the magnificent portrait of himself now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. He stands in the crimson robes

¹ p. 130, Keating.



GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

and cap of a Doctor of Laws, his left hand resting on a table near a bust of Michael Angelo. His admission into the Academy of Florence, and the appearance in the same year of a translation of his first seven Discourses into Italian, greatly pleased him. Some impression of the dignity and beauty of the portrait is obtained from the reproduction of Valentine Green's fine mezzo-tint, which serves as frontispiece to this volume. There are two replicas of this famous picture, one at Knoke, and the other belongs to Sir C. Tennant, Bart.

The following year was one of great productiveness. To the exhibition he contributed thirteen pictures. Among them were portraits of Lady Bampfylde, Lady Derby, and a group of the Duke of Bedford, Lord John, and Lord William Russell, with their cousin Miss Vernon, all on one canvas. An exquisite picture of Lady Caroline Montagu, the young daughter of the fourth Duke of Buccleuch, in long cloak, bonnet, and muff, in the snow, was in the same exhibition. Walpole, with unwonted enthusiasm, wrote of it: She "looks so smiling and good-humoured that one longs to catch her up in one's arms and kiss her."¹

In the spring of 1777 he began, and through-

¹ p. 132, J. R. Smith.

out this year and the next he was working at the famous portrait groups of the members of the Dilettanti Society. No English painter before Reynolds, or since, has attempted such a task. Leslie uses no exaggerated language when he writes that they are worthy "to take place beside the canvases on which Titian and Tintoret, Vandyck, Rembrandt, and Rubens have grouped Venetian patricians, English cavaliers, and Low Country doctors, burghers, and statesmen." He proceeds: "The pictures have a rich yet silvery splendour of colour, showing that in them Sir Joshua was aiming less at the effect of Rembrandt than of Veronese." The illustrations at page 134 are from the rare engravings of Turner (Group No. 1), and Say (Group No. 2), of which only three hundred copies were printed, when the plates were destroyed. The engravings are in the Print Room of the British Museum.

Another great canvas on his easel was the celebrated group of the family of the Duke of Marlborough. During the spring the Duke and Duchess and the youthful members of the family sat in Reynolds's studio; but the younger children were painted at Blenheim, where Sir Joshua spent some weeks in the



LADY CAROLINE MONTAGU

autumn.¹ If this picture does not rank with his greatest work, it certainly stands high.

We get a good idea of Reynolds's kindness from an incident connected with this picture. A young artist named Powell was permitted to take the finished picture home to copy. Being in debt his room was seized, with Reynolds's picture in it, by the bailiffs. Before Sir Joshua could recover it, he had to send his servant, with a cheque covering the artist's debt.

Besides these great canvases, among the portraits of the year are the Archbishop of York, Lady Betty Delme, Lady Elizabeth Somerset, Lady Eglinton at the harp, Mrs. Carnac, the charming portrait now in the Wallace Gallery;² and, finally, his fair friend Angelica Kauffmann, who was always interesting to him.

p. 136, Turner.

² p. 138, J. R. Smith.



CHAPTER XVII

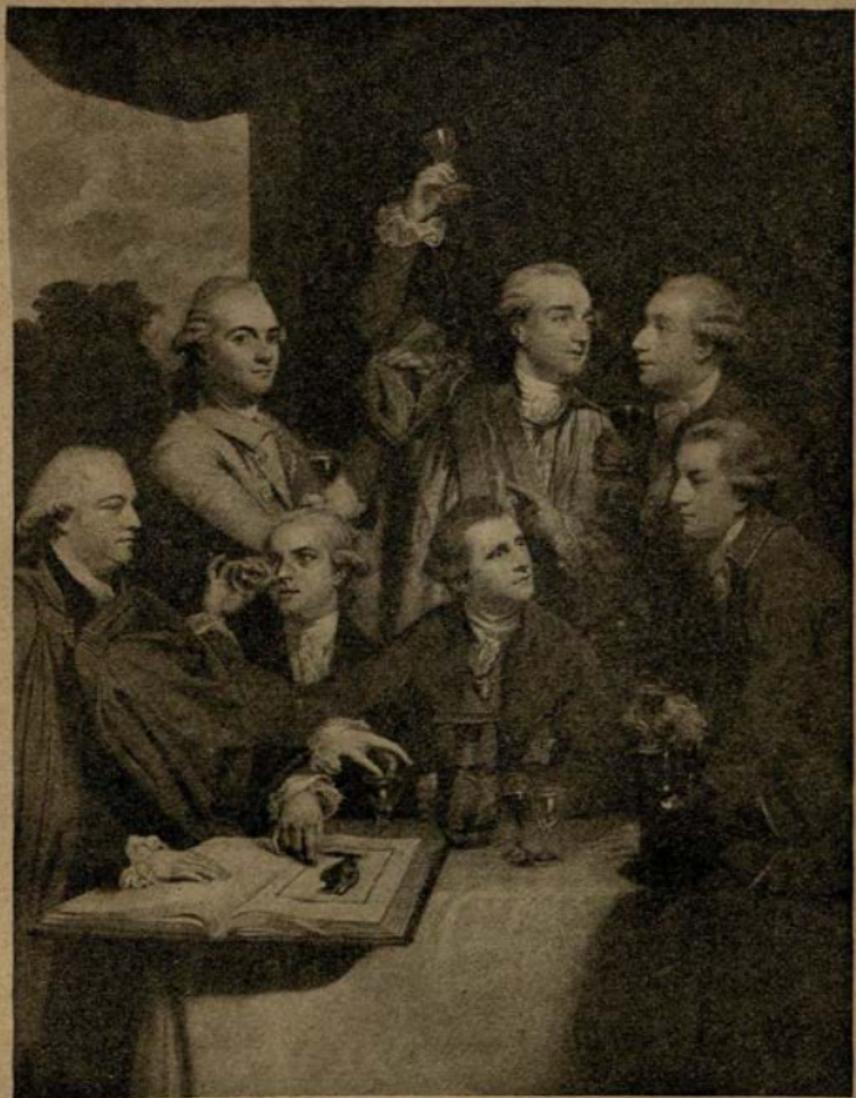
HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

The "inner circle"—Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, and Garrick—Introduction to Johnson—Johnson's affection for Reynolds—Their junketing in Devon—Johnson's dying requests—Reynolds's friendship with Goldsmith—Dedication of *The Deserted Village* to Reynolds—Goldsmith's rebuke—The *Retaliation*.

SO far I have written of Reynolds's work, but something must be said of his friends. In him the social instinct was almost as strong as the æsthetic. During his whole career he was the centre of a wide circle. It was said of him that every sitter became a friend; and it was partly no doubt by his rare power of sympathetic insight that he was able so unflinchingly to reveal the best aspects of character in his portraiture. His studio was not only his workshop; it became a favourite meeting-place of the leading spirits of his age. No man more keenly enjoyed the pleasure of society. He was happy in the familiar friendliness of club life, enjoyed its personal gossip,



THE DILETTANTI SOCIETY: GROUP I



THE DILETTANTI SOCIETY: GROUP II

its penchant for card-playing and for good dinners, its discussions of literature and politics carried on by distinguished men who were enriching literature and making history. The lighter and perhaps more attractive social pleasure of the "salons" of "the Blues," or pleasant hours in the green-room of the theatres, or in the shady groves of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, where men and women met and lightened the leisure of work-a-day lives by exchange of wit and the play of glancing eyes, the sheen of jewels and display of pretty costumes, the "touch-and-go" hours of life which in themselves count as trifles, but serve to give colour and light to existence—these too had their charm for him. Though he enjoyed these forms of social pleasure to the full, there was an "inner circle" of friends whose sympathies were not for the hour only, but lasted through life, a source of strength as well as happiness, friends linked to his heart as "with hoops of steel." Of these were Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, and Garrick. If it be true that a man is known by his friends, Reynolds was of a goodly company.

Very soon after his return from Italy, Reynolds had read with delight Dr. Johnson's fascinating Essay on Savage. He began to

read it, Boswell records, "while he was standing with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece. It seized his attention so strongly that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move he found his arm ~~totally~~ benumbed." Reynolds's introduction to Johnson is characteristic of both men. Malone describes their meeting at the house of the Misses Cotterell, daughters of Admiral Cotterell: "The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations, upon which Reynolds quietly observed: 'You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burden of gratitude.' They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion as too selfish; but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind*, the fair view of human nature which it exhibited, like some of the Reflections of Rochefoucauld. The consequence was that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him." Boswell says that "Reynolds was truly the *dulce decus* of Johnson," with whom he maintained an uninterrupted intimacy to the last hour of his life. At Mrs. Thrale's Johnson said on one occasion, when Reynolds left the room: "There goes a man not to be spoiled



THE MARLBOROUGH FAMILY

by prosperity." Again, when the conversation turned upon Foote, the actor, Johnson said : "When Foote has told me something, I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow ; when Reynolds tells me something, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more." It was to Reynolds that Johnson said : " If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair."

Although Johnson's friendship for Reynolds led him to take some interest in art, and even resulted, as has been already said, in his accepting an honorary professorship in the Royal Academy, it is evident that Johnson cared little, and knew little, of art. As Edmund Burke expressed it to Malone : "Johnson neither understood nor desired to understand anything of painting, and had no distinct idea of its nomenclature, even in those parts which had got most into use in common life." The business of an artist seemed to Johnson to be playing with life. In a letter to Baretti (1761) he writes somewhat scornfully : "This exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the

assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time—of that time which can never return.” Yet “this exhibition,” with a catalogue containing a prosaic preface from Johnson’s pen, had in it contributions from Gainsborough, Wilson, McArdeU, and several fine pictures by Reynolds, one being the masterpiece, “Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy.”

When Reynolds painted Johnson reading, his book characteristically near his eyes, Johnson was offended by this allusion to his near-sightedness, and protested that he would not consent to be handed down to posterity as “Blinking Sam,” adding that he had no objection to Reynolds painting himself “as deaf as he chooses.” Reynolds never tired of depicting the features of Johnson, and in each portrait there is revealed profound knowledge of the strength and weakness of the great man’s character. The portrait of Johnson now in the National Gallery,¹ for force, simplicity, and insight will bear comparison with Raphael’s masterpiece in the neighbouring room, the priceless Julius Second. In both portraits the men live.

Johnson admired Reynolds, not for his genius as a painter, but for the unfailing charm of his

¹ p. 140, Doughty.



MRS. CARNAC

society. He loved the man. I have said that the friends, in the autumn of 1762, went together for a six weeks' tour into Devonshire. Reynolds had the pleasure of introducing him to his old friends in and about Plympton. Johnson (according to Northcote) astonished the Devonshire people by his voracious appetite for clotted cream, and honey, and cider. The sedate lexicographer appeared in a new light also by "joyously racing with a young lady on the lawn at one of the Devonshire houses, kicking off his tight slippers high into the air as he ran, and, when he had won, leading the lady back in triumphant delight." This is told on the authority of Miss Reynolds. It was a sight one would have liked to see.

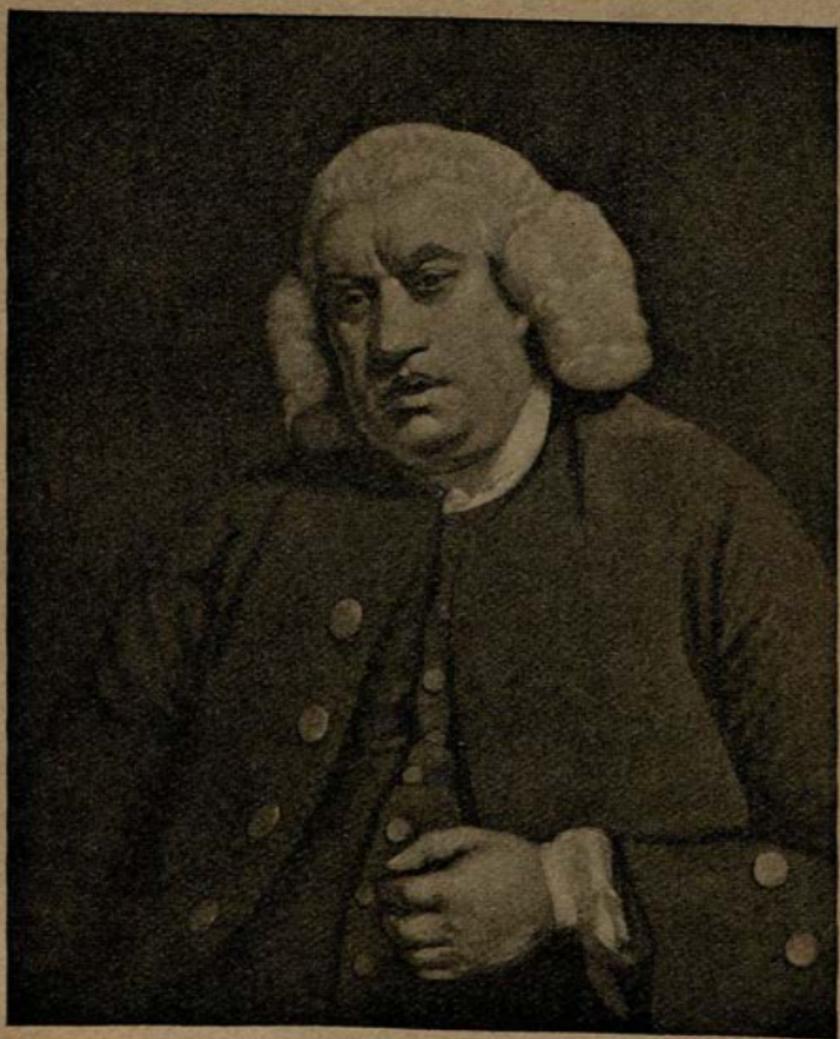
A delightful glimpse of the relations of the men is obtained from a letter of Johnson's written to Reynolds while he was recovering from a dangerous illness. The warm heart that lay beneath the rugged surface speaks eloquently in it. "I did not hear of your sickness," Johnson wrote, "till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escaped that part of the pain which every man must feel to whom you are known as you are known to me. Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not in what state

it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you; in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man who I call a friend. Pray let me hear from yourself, or from dear Miss Reynolds."

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, sir, is the most invulnerable man I know; the man with whom, if you should quarrel, you would find the most difficulty how to abuse." That is another criticism of Johnson's, recorded by Boswell.

Their friendship, from which each gained much, lasted unbroken for over thirty years. No two men were ever more unlike each other; yet each appreciated and enjoyed the qualities of the other. Reynolds, as Boswell tells us, was by him as he lay dying, and soothed his latest hours by promising to fulfil his three last characteristic requests — "to forgive him thirty pounds which he had borrowed of him; to read the Bible; and never to use his pencil on a Sunday." The two first petitions were cheerfully promised; the last was more difficult to obey.

Another of the "inner circle" of Reynolds's



DR. JOHNSON

friends was Oliver Goldsmith.¹ Northcote says that when he died, "Reynolds did not touch his pencil that day"; a rare occurrence in his working life, telling more eloquently than many words what the loss meant to him. Johnson was fourteen years senior to Reynolds; Goldsmith was five years his junior. Reynolds and Goldsmith differed in many respects, yet in essentials they were of one type of mind. Both had a keen eye for style, for character, and for beauty; both ever had their eyes wide open to the joyous side of life; genial, tolerant, and sympathetic souls both, with a touch of Bohemianism even, they understood and loved each other. No two men of that age had more of the magnetic charm that sweetens society and literature alike.

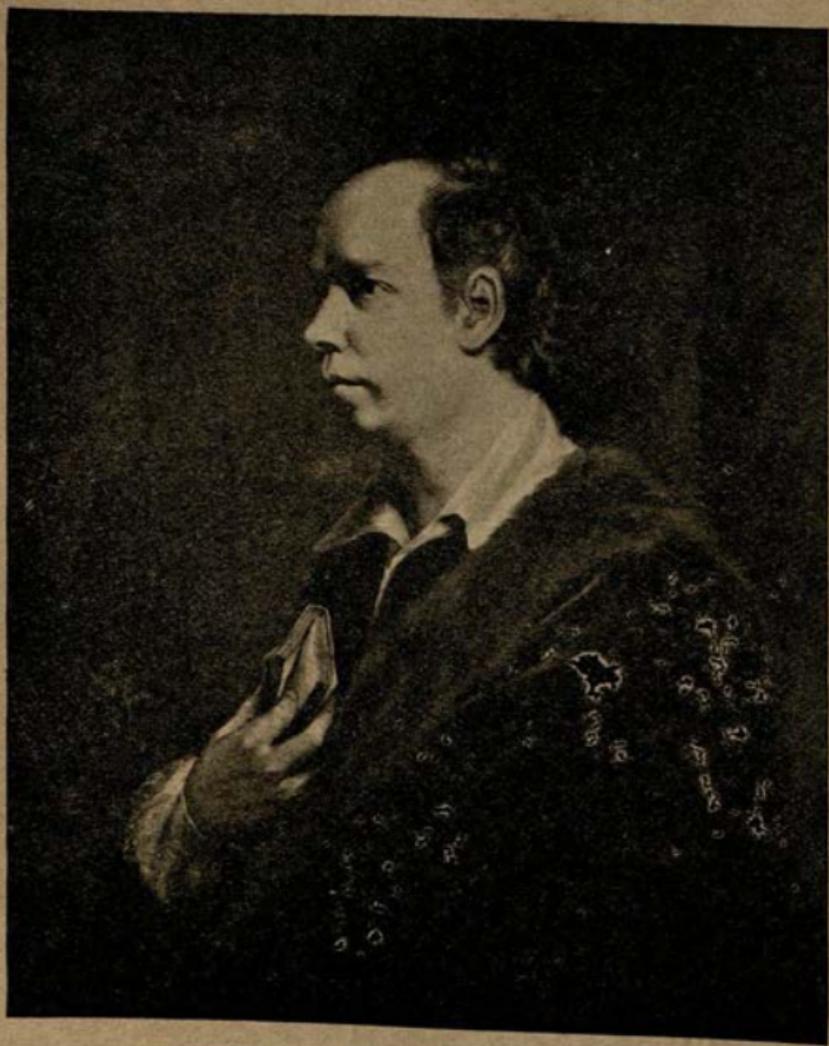
Reynolds met Goldsmith in Johnson's rooms for the first time in 1761, some years before the appearance of the *Vicar of Wakefield*; and at their earliest meetings they struck up a warm friendship. At this stage Goldsmith was deep in the struggle for mere livelihood. When fortune did fitfully shine on him, his gay Irish temperament asserted itself in thoughtless extravagance that speedily sank him

¹ p. 142, Marchi.

again in a morass of debt. Reynolds, a prosperous man in worldly goods compared with Goldsmith or Johnson, was ever ready with open purse to either of them on emergency. None of Goldsmith's friends received the *Vicar of Wakefield* with greater enthusiasm and congratulation than Reynolds did. In Reynolds's pocket-book there are entries recording frequent dinners with Goldsmith, and we know that Goldsmith was a regular guest at Leicester Square. They dined together on the important evening, 29th January, 1768, when *The Good-natured Man*, Goldsmith's first comedy, was produced at Covent Garden, and the poor author was "one mass of nerves" as to its reception. One can imagine the strength and comfort imparted to "dear Goldie" by the society of his calm, philosophic, but wholly sympathetic friend, who felt more assured than the author did of the merits of the comedy.

They were often together at the "Shilling-rubber" Club, which met at "The Devil" tavern in Fleet Street, the favourite haunt for several generations of literary Bohemia; and they were comrades in the revels of Ranelagh and Vauxhall.

When Reynolds was drafting into the newly



OLIVER GOLDSMITH

created Royal Academy all the distinguished men whose names were likely to give lustre to the arts, he insisted on Goldsmith, now Dr. Goldsmith, becoming the Professor of Ancient History. The position was only honorary, and its chief duties were the attendance at the annual Academy dinners. Goldsmith wittily remarked that such honours to him "were like ruffles to a man who had no shirt."

When *The Deserted Village*—the most human and in some respects the most exquisite of mid-eighteenth century poems—was published, he dedicated it to Reynolds in these words: "I can have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing by my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you." Reynolds in his turn dedicated to Goldsmith T. Watson's engraving of his fine

picture, "Resignation," quoting the lines from *The Deserted Village*—

"How blest is he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labour with an age of ease," etc.

Northcote says, and he can easily be believed, that Goldsmith "knows very little about pictures"; but, his ignorance notwithstanding, he administered on an important occasion a timely rebuke to Reynolds that must have struck home. Dr. Beattie's portrait had been painted, as we have seen, by Reynolds, who added to the portrait an allegorical personification of Truth thrusting aside three demons. To these demons Reynolds was suspected (though he pled guilty only to Voltaire) of giving the features of Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon. This indignity to the philosophers and historians aroused Goldsmith's anger. He protested to Reynolds, "How could you degrade so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie? The existence of Dr. Beattie and his book together will be forgotten in the space of ten years, but your allegorical picture and the fame of Voltaire will live for ever, to your disgrace as a flatterer." There is no record of Reynolds's reply.

In the *Retaliation*, however, we get Gold-

smith's true estimate of Reynolds. In that sparkling poem he takes ample revenge on Garrick for his bitter epitaph—

“Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll
Who wrote like an ange but talked like poor Poll”

and gives a passing flick to Burke :—

“Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind”

but he changes to a different key when he comes to deal with Reynolds :—

“Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind :
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand ;
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland ;
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart ;
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of
hearing :
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and
stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.”

Johnson and Reynolds alike mourned when Goldsmith died. It was at Reynolds's dinner-table, not long after Goldsmith's death, that some wits amused themselves by criticising him in a hostile manner ; Johnson, who had listened with impatience and wrath, suddenly rose and thundered : “If nobody was suffered to abuse poor Goldie but those who could write as well, he would have few censors.”

CHAPTER XVIII

HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS—*continued*

Edmund Burke—David Garrick—Boswell dedicates his Biography of Johnson to Reynolds—Boswell's characteristic letter—Gibbon—"The Club"—His club life—The Dilettanti Society.

EDMUND BURKE, like Johnson and Goldsmith, at a very early stage in Reynolds's London career became an intimate friend, and was his friend thereafter for life. He was Reynolds's junior by five years. Johnson introduced them. Burke was a frequent, and always welcome, guest at Reynolds's table. Burke had theories on "the sublime and the beautiful," which doubtless Reynolds and he well discussed in the earlier stages of their friendship in Burke's rooms "over a bookseller's shop by the entrance to the Temple," ere they were given to the world in 1756. Burke was not too much absorbed in politics, after he became Member of Parliament for Wexford, to sit for Reynolds's fine portrait of him,



EDMUND BURKE

painted in 1769.¹ It enables us to realise the aspect of the man in his prime, whom his opponents dubbed "The Irish Adventurer."

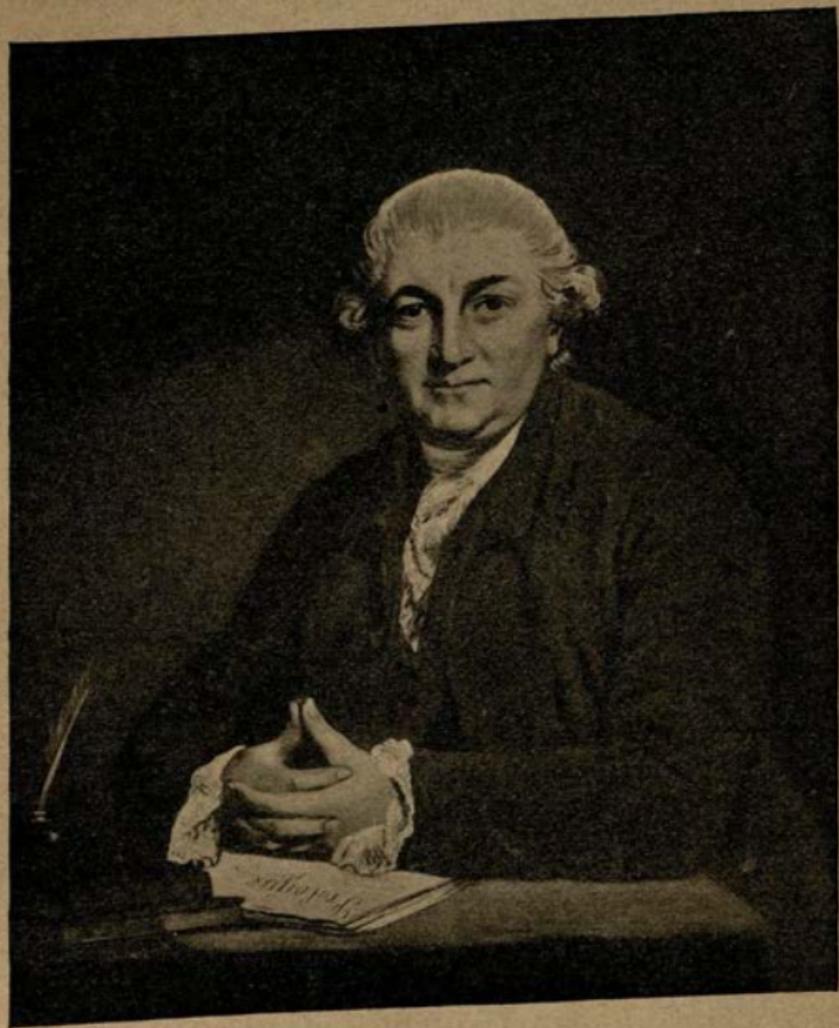
Reynolds was never more "in his element" than when he was painting David Garrick. He loved the man; he delighted in his society. He owed him—as all his generation did—a debt of gratitude for innumerable blissful hours in the theatre. At the clubs, in society, at his own table and in his studio, in the green-room of the theatre, and at Garrick's pleasant villa at Hampton (at the present day being "improved off" the face of the earth), Reynolds spent many happy hours in the great actor's society. Northcote repeats a shrewd saying of Sir Joshua's, which he heard while Mrs. Garrick was sitting for the picture of herself and Garrick. She was complaining of the scurrilities that Foote indulged in towards her husband, in the papers and in the theatre. Sir Joshua soothed her thus: "This need not give you pain, as it clearly proves Foote to be your husband's inferior. It is always the smaller man who envies and abuses." He had himself endured the shafts of envy from Barry, and was yet to suffer at the hands of Hone. No man of the distinguished company that followed

¹ p. 147, J. Watson.

Garrick to his last resting-place in Westminster Abbey more genuinely mourned the loss of the inimitable actor than did Reynolds.¹

It was natural that a man so loved by Johnson should have been held in high respect by Boswell. Boswell admired Reynolds, and Reynolds liked him, but he was never in the most intimate "inner circle." Reynolds figures largely in the immortal Biography, and Boswell paid him the tribute of dedicating it to him. Boswell says in the dedication: "Every liberal motive that can actuate an Authour in the dedication of his labours, concurs in directing me to you, as the person to whom the following work should be inscribed. . . . Your excellence, not only in the Art over which you have long presided with unrivalled fame, but also in Philosophy and elegant Literature, is well known to the present, and will continue to be the admiration of future ages. Your equal and placid temper, your variety of conversation, your true politeness, by which you are so amiable in private society, and that enlarged hospitality which has long made your home a common centre of union for the great, the accomplished, the learned, and the ingenious. All these qualities I can, in perfect

¹ p. 148, T. Watson.



DAVID GARRICK

confidence of not being accused of flattery, ascribe to you." He then touches upon the deep and sincere friendship that existed to his knowledge between Johnson and Reynolds, as a fitting reason why Reynolds's name should be linked with Johnson's in the Biography.

Boswell has been much twitted for the diplomatic way in which he managed to get Reynolds to paint his portrait. His purse was lean, but he had "prospects," and he had an ambition to be limned by the great artist. So he sent to Reynolds the following letter, which is too characteristic to be omitted:—

"My dear Sir,—The debts which I contracted in my father's lifetime will not be cleared off by me for some years. I therefore think it unconscientious to indulge myself in any expensive article of elegant luxury. But in the meantime you may die, or I may die; and I should regret very much that there should not be at Auchinleck my portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I have the felicity of living in social intimacy. I have a proposal to make to you. I am for certain to be called to the English Bar next February. Will you now do my picture? and the price shall be paid to you out of the first fees which

I receive as a barrister in Westminster Hall. Or if that fund should fail, it shall be paid, at any rate, five years hence by myself or my representatives. If you are pleased to approve of this proposal, your signifying your concurrence underneath upon two duplicates, one of which shall be kept by each of us, will be a sufficient voucher of the obligation.

“I ever am, with very sincere regards, my dear sir, your faithful and affectionate, humble servant,

“JAMES BOSWELL.”

7th June, 1785.

Whether Boswell's "first fees" ever reached Sir Joshua, I know not; I think it may be doubted; but the result was the bust, life-size portrait, now in the National Gallery, which reveals Boswell in a powdered wig, his dark, observing eyes looking at the spectator from under arched eyebrows; weak mouth, and small double-chin. That Reynolds was not discontented with his bargain may be inferred from the fact that at a later time he presented Boswell with a portrait of Dr. Johnson, which he had painted for himself. No one has done so much as Boswell to lift the curtain that would have hidden from us for ever the social and intellectual life of the remarkable men

and women of the latter half of the eighteenth century. He elaborated with the pen what Reynolds revealed with the brush.

Boswell's allusion in the Dedication to Reynolds's "enlarged hospitality" was well founded. He welcomed to his table most of the eminent men and women of his time—noblemen, bishops, authors, painters, actors—indeed all who were interested in literature or art.

Despite the ill-founded suspicion that Reynolds aimed a blow at Gibbon in his picture of Dr. Beattie, the great historian became one of Sir Joshua's intimates. They had intellectual sympathies, and both men loved pleasure. After Goldsmith's death they became companions at the clubs, went together to masquerades and theatres, and there are frequent records of their friendly dinners. Sir Joshua's portrait of Gibbon (not a lovable face) was exhibited at the Academy in 1780. Walpole, the hypercritical, remarks of it, "good and like."

Reynolds lived in an age of clubs; and no man of his time, despite his deafness, was more "clubable." Any adequate account of the club life of the eighteenth century would require a volume to itself. One of the most

interesting, and permanent, was "The Club," known also as "The Literary Club," founded by Reynolds. It plays an important part in Boswell's record of Johnson's life. "The Club" was founded in 1764, and originally consisted of twelve members who, at first, supped together on Monday evenings at the "Turk's Head," in Gerard Street; but in 1775 the supper became a dinner, held once a fortnight during the Parliamentary Session. The "twelve" have left their mark on the history of their age. They were—Reynolds, Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Nugent (Burke's father-in-law), Topham Beauclerk, Bennet Langton, Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, Percy (of the *Rèliques*), Sam Dyer, and Sir Robert Chambers. The list of members soon swelled. But it was by no means easy to gain admission to that charmed circle. When Reynolds repeated to Dr. Johnson the remark made by Garrick, "I think I shall be of you," the irascible doctor, much as he loved Garrick, growled, "*He* be of us! How does he know we will *permit* him? The first Duke in England has no right to hold such language." But Garrick did become a member; and Boswell also, Reynolds urging on behalf of the latter against his detractors, that "Boswell thaws

reserve whenever he comes, and sets the ball of conversation rolling." Gibbon, Adam Smith, and Sheridan came in later.

Among other clubs frequented by Reynolds, and their names only can be mentioned here, were "The Artists," whose headquarters were at Slaughter's, St. Martin's Lane; "The Shilling-rubber Club," which foregathered for modest whist at "The Devil," in Fleet Street (Sir Joshua was very fond of whist, but was only a second-rate player); "The Devonshire," dear to Sir Joshua as a loyal son of Devon; "The Eumelian," founded by Dr. Ash (the club was named from the Greek synonym of the ash-tree, in compliment to Dr. Ash), met at the Blenheim Tavern in Bond Street; "The Sour-crust Club"; "The Thursday-night Club," composed of a rather "fast," card-playing, masquerading set, whose domicile was at "The Star and Garter," in Pall Mall. We hear of him also at "Almack's," "Arthur's," "the Beef-steak," "White's," and at "The Savoir-vivre Club," the members of the last being chiefly gay young bloods known at the time as "Macaronis," who mingled with their coarser pleasures a kindly patronage of the Arts.

He was most regular also in attendance at

the Sunday dinners at "The Star and Garter" of that select band of connoisseurs, whose influence on Art in England it would be difficult to over-estimate, the Dilettanti Society. The society had its official painter. In 1769 (three years after his election) Reynolds was appointed painter to the society. Hence came into existence the two magnificent portrait groups in the possession of the society. The pictures have already been alluded to.¹

His interest was not, however, limited to clubs connected with the Arts, or devoted to social purposes; he was also a member of the Society of Antiquaries, and of the Royal Society.

¹ p. 134, G. C. Turner, Group 1; p. 134, W. Say, Group 2.

CHAPTER XIX

REYNOLDS'S LADY FRIENDS

His power of depicting feminine beauty—Angelica Kauffmann — Miss Thackeray's *Miss Angel* — Fanny Burney — His delight in *Evelina* — Flirtation — Hannah More—Mrs. Siddons, the two great portraits of her, Reynolds's and Gainsborough's.

NO account of Reynolds would be complete without some reference to his lady friends. They were many, and of all classes. The fine dames, from duchesses to the humblest commoner, were all attracted by the man whom Sterne called "the son of Apollo." They approved of his flattering brush. They sought to be handed down to posterity as angels, and he gave them their heart's desire. Reynolds's maxim that the portrait-painter's duty "is to aim at discovering the perfections only of those whom he is to represent," was exactly their idea of the artist's mission. And he had the magic power and insight needed to put his maxim into practice. No painter ever more

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successfully gave expression on canvas to the mystic charm and grace of feminine beauty.

The marvel is that, with his opportunities, he remained heart-whole. He died a bachelor. There is no veritable record of any heart-affair in all his career. Miss Thackeray, in her inimitable way, has written a charming novel, *Miss Angel*, in which Sir Joshua and Angelica Kauffmann—"Angel" as he calls her in his pocket-book—play leading parts. But fiction has its privileges; and not infrequently penetrates into a truth that history misses. It is certain that Sir Joshua had a strong regard for Angelica Kauffmann. Twice he painted her portrait, and once she returned the compliment. By his influence, rather more than by any artistic merit of hers, she became an Academician. Rumour very freely coupled their names together. Goldsmith "chaffed" him in the merry lines—

" But 'tis Reynolds's way
From wisdom to stray,
And Angelica's whim
To be frolic like him."

In her hour of deepest trouble—when she was deluded into marriage with a valet of Count Horne, who successfully for a time personated Count Horne—Reynolds helped her

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to procure a dissolution of her marriage. But there is no evidence that he ever seriously desired to take the swindler's place in her affections.

Perhaps the woman who could have won his heart if she had been so inclined was Fanny Burney, one of those women who, as Matthew Arnold says of Madame de Beaumont, "leave a sort of perfume in literary history, and who have the gift of inspiring successive generations of readers with an indescribable regret not to have known them." Her verbal picture of Reynolds, her insight into his character, her sketches of his household and circle, are almost as good as Boswell's. Like Burke, and Johnson, and Gibbon, Reynolds had been enchanted with *Evelina*. Reynolds is said to have sat up all night to finish reading it. He was introduced to the shy young authoress at Mrs. Thrale's. When the wished-for introduction came at Streatham, Miss Burney records, "he several times spoke to me, though he did not make love." It was not long before Mrs. Thrale, a woman of keen insight, and later, Mrs. Montague, a born matchmaker, were arranging "a match" between Reynolds and the gifted young novelist. Reynolds confessed to Johnson that "there was nobody he should

so much fear as this little Burney," if he had really contemplated matrimony. She supped frequently at Leicester Square, and however large or distinguished the company, she sat next to Sir Joshua, who protected her from effusive compliments and criticisms of her literary productions. On the breaking up of a pleasant party Miss Burney tells us: "Sir Joshua desired he might convey me home; I declined his offer, and he pressed it a good deal, drolly saying, 'Why, I am old enough, a'n't I?' and turning to Dr. Johnson, he said, 'Sir, is not this very hard? Nobody thinks me very young' (the old gallant was then fifty-nine), 'yet Miss Burney won't give me the privilege of age in letting me see her home. She says I a'n't old enough.' 'Ay, sir,' said the Doctor, 'did I not tell you she was a writer of romances?'"

Another friend of Sir Joshua, and of his circle, was the accomplished Hannah More, who always sought as much of his society as she could get on her visits to London from the Bristol boarding-school. She was usually the guest of Garrick and his wife; but frequently found her way to Johnson's, and to the Leicester Square studio. She was introduced to Johnson at Reynolds's house. She describes



MRS. SIDDONS AS THE TRAGIC MUSE

how Sir Joshua on that occasion, receiving her downstairs, prepared her for the chance of the Doctor being in a gloomy and silent mood; but when she reached the drawing-room he met her smiling, Sir Joshua's macaw¹ perched on his shoulder, and was most gracious—so gracious that the Doctor, who had a genius for putting himself on good terms with young ladies (Miss More was then twenty-nine), before the first interview closed was telling her "she was a silly thing." She speaks of Reynolds as "the idol of every company."

Like the rest of the London world, Sir Joshua became enamoured of Mrs. Siddons, the "divine Sarah" of that generation. He had seen her play Portia in 1776, but it was not until her second appearance in London in 1782 (she was then in her twenty-eighth year) that she took the town by storm. The artists were all eager to paint her. She inspired Reynolds and Gainsborough to their highest efforts. Gainsborough's beautiful picture, now in the National Gallery, presents her with grace and charm as the lady in society who won all hearts. It hardly suggests the story told of the impetuous and outspoken artist

¹ The macaw figures in many of Sir Joshua's pictures, *vide* "Lady Cockburn," p. 126.

while painting it. Gainsborough, it is said, found difficulty in depicting the curve of Mrs. Siddons' nose; after painting it, and repeatedly deleting it, he exclaimed, "Damn your nose, madam, there is no end to it!"

The portrait of Mrs. Siddons painted by Reynolds is from such a totally different standpoint in his masterpiece "The Tragic Muse"¹ that nothing can be gained by comparing them. Gainsborough's picture is the exquisite prose of Art; Reynolds's the exquisite poetry. Both pictures may be taken as types—Gainsborough's of "the real," and Sir Joshua's as "the ideal" in portraiture. Characteristic of the man was that courtly saying of Sir Joshua's as he finished the picture and printed his name on the fringe of the green mantle over her knee, "I could not lose the honour this opportunity afforded me of going down to posterity on the hem of your garment."

Deaf as Sir Joshua was, he sat "rapt and breathless in the orchestra when Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance as Lady Macbeth." In his pocket-books his friendly relations with her are indicated by frequent dinner engagements and evening parties at her house.

¹ p. 158, Haward.



VIRGIN AND CHILD

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The theatre supplied him with some of his best subjects. Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Yates, Kitty Clive, Nelly O'Brien, and Mrs. Billington, whose faces he immortalised, were also of his friends.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE STUDIO—*continued*

The designs for New College window, Oxford—Their partial success—The Madonna col Bambino—"Portraits of Two Gentlemen"—Sitting from the Queen—"The Ladies Waldegrave"—The "high-water mark" of his productiveness—His illness and recovery—"The Tragic Muse"—Appointed "King's Painter"—"The Infant Hercules"—Gift of the Empress of Russia—Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery—Portraits of Lord Heathfield and R. B. Sheridan—Landscape—Malone's description of his personal appearance—His partial blindness.

DURING the year 1778 Reynolds was absorbed in a great undertaking, the designs for the west window of New College, Oxford. The bigotry of the Bishop of London had prevented him and his brother artists from decorating St. Paul's. Reynolds was able to utilise the subject he had chosen, "the Nativity," for the Oxford window. The subject fascinated him. The theme, noble and ideal in itself, was bound from its nature to challenge comparison with the work of the great Italian masters. Does the result justify



THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND

the comparison? It has to be confessed that, interesting as the window undoubtedly is, the work indicates Reynolds's limitations as much as his power. Individual panels have great beauty, and, seen with the glow of sunset upon them, there are passages of glorious colour; but as a whole the window is lacking in unity and harmony of design. This may partly be due to a change in the original plan. The subjects incorporated in the west window were originally meant to be distributed in several windows. Reynolds wrote to Mr. Oglander, one of the Fellows of New College: "My idea is to paint, in the great space in the centre, Christ in the manger, on the principle that Correggio has done it in the famous picture called the *Notte*, making all the light to proceed from Christ," Mason records that Jervas's treatment of the glass from the original designs grievously disappointed Sir Joshua. The sky in the window certainly has now no resemblance to "the study of clouds" in Sir Joshua's sketches. The silvery tones of the central panel are lovely, but there is little definition in form. The Divine Babe is almost indiscernible in the sheen of the surrounding angels. The figure of "Charity," clasping close an infant to her

shoulder, has pathos as well as beauty, and has some ideal qualities lacking in the Madonna. "Hope," gazing upward in wistful adoration, is full of charm. But the "Cardinal Virtues" were palpably English women, and the heads of Garrick and Reynolds are of too intellectual and latter-day type to lend themselves appropriately to the attitudes of adoring shepherds. The effect of the window is further injured, as Walpole pointed out, "the antechapel where it is placed is too narrow but to see it foreshortened."

The designs for the various panels were begun as cartoons in "black and white," but they were finished in oils of rich colouring. For the original painting of "The Nativity," the Duke of Rutland paid Sir Joshua £1,200. It unfortunately perished in the disastrous fire at Belvoir in 1816. The designs of "Charity," "Hope," and "Faith," and the four "Cardinal Virtues" fetched £5,565 at Lady Thomond's sale in 1821.

More beautiful and spiritual than any of the figures in the New College is the lovely Virgin and Child, painted in 1787 (known as the "Madonna col Bambino"), now at Petworth. The face and figure of the Madonna are essentially modern and English in type. The



THE LADIES WALDEGRAVE

picture is imbued with a profoundly religious sentiment.¹

A magnificent picture of this year now graces the Reynolds Room in the National Gallery, the "Portraits of Two Gentlemen." In colour and draughtsmanship, and in masterly power of depicting character, it rivals Vandyck. The two friends were the Rev. George Huddesford, a Warwickshire parson, and Mr. J. C. W. Bampfylde. Other portraits of note of the same period are those of Lady Beaumont; Mrs. Payne Gallwey, carrying her little son pick-a-back; and a lovely child-group of his friend Mr. Parker's two children.

During 1779 his old friend Keppel was, amid popular rejoicings, acquitted in a court-martial at Portsmouth, which had become necessary by the slanders of his enemies. Reynolds, after the acquittal, was commissioned to paint five portraits of Keppel for his enthusiastic friends. One of these now hangs in the National Gallery—a strong; manly figure, of stern aspect, with hand on the hilt of his sword; another of the portraits is in the National Portrait Gallery.

He had, during the same year, the honour of a sitting from the Queen for the picture

¹ p. 160, J. R. Smith.

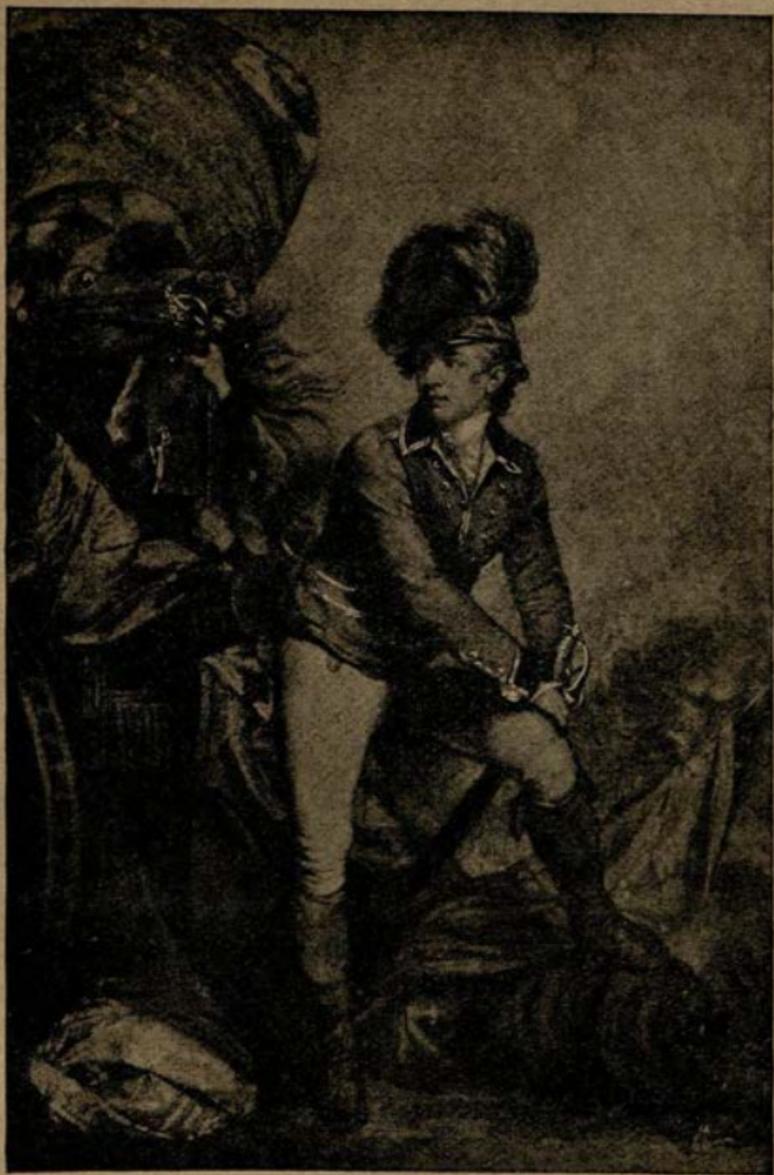
belonging to the Royal Academy. He was busy also with portraits of Lady Gertrude, daughter of Lord Ossory, whom he had previously painted when she was a child; of Miss Monckton, one of the "Blue Stockings" of the period; and of the Duchess of Hamilton. Besides these there are the portraits of the Countess of Bute, Lady Louisa Manners, and Lady Jane Halliday.

At the beginning of the following year, 1780, he spent a fortnight at Belvoir, the guest of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland. His noble portrait of the Duchess, which we know through Valentine Green's masterly mezzotint,¹ was painted this year. It perished, with many valuable works of Sir Joshua, and other priceless treasures, in the fire at Belvoir in 1816. Another beautiful picture of the year is the portrait of Prince William of Gloucester, standing in Vandyck costume, the son of Reynolds's fair friend, Lady Waldegrave, now the Duchess of Gloucester. The Academy this year exhibited for the first time at Somerset House. The Academicians had decorated the rooms. The ceiling of the Library was painted by Sir Joshua, who took for his subject "Theory," a female figure, treated allegoric-

¹ p. 162, Valentine Green.



LADY CATHERINE PELHAM-CLINTON FEEDING CHICKENS



COLONEL TARLETON

ally, seated on clouds and holding in her hand a scroll. An interesting "study" for this work is in the Gift Room of the Diploma Gallery in Burlington House. In the "Antique" Room of Somerset House hung Sir Joshua's full-lengths of the King and Queen.

Reynolds was now at work on perhaps the loveliest group on one canvas that ever left his easel, the three grand-nieces of Horace Walpole, daughters of the beautiful Lady Waldegrave. They inspired him to his highest powers. They are seated, dressed in white, at a work-table; two of the sisters are engaged in winding a skein of silk, while the third is absorbed in her tambouring-frame. The picture is a delicious idyll. Of harmonious colour, and of exquisite discrimination of character; it has a quite indescribable charm. The beauty of English womanhood has never received more adequate expression.¹ The original belongs to Mrs. Thwaites.

To the exhibition of 1781 Reynolds sent fourteen pictures. They represent "the high-water mark" of his productiveness. It was one of his "great" years. Besides (1) the superb picture of "The Ladies Waldegrave," he exhibited (2) *Thais*, an anonymous lady;

¹ p. 164, Valentine Green.

(3) Dr. Burney, one of his strongest portraits ; (4) Mr. Thoroton ; (5) the children of the Duke of Rutland ; (6) Master Bunbury ; (7) "The Death of Dido" ; (8) Lord Richard Cavendish (the Eastern traveller : a superb portrait) ; (9) the Duchess of Rutland ; (10) the Countess of Salisbury ; (11) "Temperance" (for the New College window) ; (12) "Fortitude" (also for New College) ; (13) a child asleep ; (14) a listening boy.

During this year he painted one of his masterpieces, the delicious portrait, in the collection of the Earl of Radnor, of Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton, feeding chickens.¹ In 1782 he painted the fine portrait of Colonel Tarleton, a brilliant cavalry officer of the time. The picture is full of "go." The Colonel is bending forward with both his hands on the hilt of his sword. His foot rests on a dismounted gun. The original belongs to A. H. Tarleton, Esq.² Other men's portraits of the year are Master Brummell, and Mr. Beckford, the millionaire of taste, if not of genius. Among the ladies' portraits were Mrs. Baldwin, the fair Greek ; and Mrs. Robinson (Perdita). To this year

¹ p. 166, J. R. Smith.

² p. 166, J. Raphael Smith.



MRS. ROBINSON, "PERDITA"

From original crayon

probably belongs the interesting crayon sketch, now in the Print Room of the British Museum, of Mrs. Robinson—actress, poetess, and “friend” of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.—which I have been permitted to reproduce.¹ The carnations and purples of the original still retain their freshness.

He contributed fifteen pictures to the exhibition of 1782. Among the portraits painted during this year were Mr. and Mrs. Wedgwood, Mrs. Musters (whom Miss Burney describes as “the reigning toast of the Season”), Mrs. Abington as Roxalana, the Duchess of Rutland, Edmund Burke and his son, Fox, and Lord Advocate Dundas. In November he had, to the alarm of his friends, a slight paralytic seizure which necessitated a break in his work, and a visit to Bath to recruit. That he returned with unimpaired powers is evident from the fact that in the following years, 1783-4, he produced what some of the best judges declare to be his greatest portrait, “Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse.”² Mr. Taylor admirably summarises its merits thus: “it is the finest example of truly idealised portraiture in which we have at once an epitome of the sitter’s

¹ p. 168.

² p. 158, Haward.

distinction, calling, or achievement, and the loftiest expression of which the real form and features are capable. In the quality of colour, as far as the head, bust, and arms are concerned, the picture ranks with the very finest of the master, and is in perfect preservation." Mr. Comyns Carr regards the picture "as in some sense the capital achievement of his life . . . it is unquestionably true that he here approaches nearer to the mellow splendour of the Venetian painters than any other artist of his time, either in England or abroad." The original picture was bought by the first Marquis of Westminster, and is now in the Duke's collection; there are two replicas, one of which adds lustre to the fine collection at Dulwich.

While he was painting "The Tragic Muse" he had sittings from Miss Kemble, the lovely sister of Mrs. Siddons, and Reynolds did justice to his subject. Lady Honeywood and Lady Dashwood, and their children, are of this year's work, and are excellent examples of his genius for portraying maternal love, and the innocence of childhood.

The next two years were full of work. Among the best of the male portraits were John Hunter, the eminent scientist, Joshua



THE INFANT HERCULES

Sharpe, Mr. Erskine, Boswell, and the Duc de Chartres (Philippe Egalité)—the last painted for the Prince of Wales. The picture is now only known from J. R. Smith's mezzo-tint, the original having been burnt at Carlton House.

In 1784 Reynolds became "King's Painter," an office of small emolument, in succession to Allan Ramsay.

The most important picture on Reynolds's easel during 1786 was the famous "Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents," a commission given to him by the Empress of Russia. He found it no easy matter to express in this picture all that was in his mind. Northcote says that Reynolds declared there were ten pictures on the canvas, some better, some worse, so often did he delete his work in order to start afresh. The subject symbolically alluded to the power of Russia, then in its infancy. Whatever may be said in opposition to Reynolds's allegorical treatment of subjects, there is generally a pretty compliment underlying his symbolism. I am inclined to think this particular subject may have been suggested to him in reading Lord Shaftesbury's *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature*, in which Shaftesbury refers to the pictorial possibilities of this subject. The centre of the

picture is occupied by the Infant Hercules who grasps a snake in each hand ; they are powerfully depicted, writhing in death throes, Iphicles, near the infant, cowers in terror ; Alcmena rushes in, and at the other side come Amphitryon and servants, with torches. For the original (now in St. Petersburg), the Empress sent Reynolds fifteen hundred guineas. She had previously sent him "a gold snuff-box adorned with her profile in bas-relief, set in diamonds," in recognition of his services to Art by the first volume of his Discourses.

More successful than the laboured composition that went to Russia are the pictures of the single figure of the infant in his cradle grappling with the snakes, belonging to Earl Fitzwilliam,¹ and to the Royal Academy. Painted a year or two later than the large canvas, the pictures, though in the nature of replicas, have more spontaneity and force.

Lady Smyth and her children, and Lady Harrington and her family, painted in 1787, are in the style of, but are not quite so irresistible as, the grand picture of Mrs. Cockburn and her children, of a former year. For Alderman Boydell's "Shakespeare Gallery" he reluctantly undertook to paint three pictures.

¹ p. 170, W. Ward, junr.



LORD HEATHFIELD

Neither in conception nor execution do they rank high. The subjects are "Puck," "The Death of Cardinal Beaufort," and "The Witches at the Cauldron in Macbeth." They come nearer to the "pot-boiling" class than any that Reynolds ever took in hand. But the good Alderman paid him handsomely for them.

The magnificent portrait of Lord Heathfield (a commission, by-the-by, of Boydell's) standing grasping the key of Gibraltar (symbolically the key to the Mediterranean), the Rock behind him, and the smoke of cannon wreathing round him,¹ was exhibited in 1788, with sixteen other works, mostly portraits; they included portraits of the Duke of York, Sir George Beaumont, and Master Stanhope. But "the picture of the year" was "The Infant Hercules."

One of the most masterly portraits of the year is that of Sheridan. Even Walpole waxes enthusiastic over it. He writes: "Praise cannot overstate the merits of this portrait. It is not canvas and colour, it is animated Nature." Excellent also are the portraits of Admiral Rodney, who was idolised by the nation; Colonel Barré; Lord Lansdowne; and

¹ p. 172, Earlom.

his friend Dr. Ash, the founder of the Eumelian Club.

In 1789 he painted a portrait of Mrs. Billington as St. Cecilia. Fine as it is, it presents a curious contrast in its materialised solidity of form to the spiritualised beauty of Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia. His grand-niece, "Offy's" daughter, Miss Gwatkin, sat for the sweet child-subject, "Simplicity." The lovely picture, belonging to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, of "Cupid and Psyche," is of this later period.¹ Psyche stoops, lamp in hand, over the sleeping Cupid. The "Continence of Scipio," now in St. Petersburg; and "Cymon and Iphigenia" (in the King's Collection) are of this, the last working year of Reynolds's life. In the latter picture, Cupid leads Cymon among the trees towards Iphigenia, who, almost nude, lies asleep on the grass.

I am unable to fix an exact date for the interesting landscape, one of the few from his brush that survives, engraved by S. W. Reynolds. Only two impressions were taken from the plate when it was accidentally destroyed, and one of them is preserved in the Print Room of the British Museum, from which

¹ p. 122, Say.



A LANDSCAPE

the illustration on p. 174¹ is reproduced. The effect of light is remarkable. To my mind it is the most interesting of the few landscapes that Reynolds has left us. It is probably an engraving of the landscape entitled "View of Castle Wilgur, on the Rhine,"—exhibited by Sir Joshua at the Royal Academy in 1789. To the Exhibition he sent twelve pictures—portraits of R. B. Sheridan, Rodney, Lord Lifford, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, Lord Vernon, a landscape, the Hon. Mrs. Watson, Miss Gwatkin ("Offy's" daughter); and imaginative subjects—"Robin Goodfellow," "Cupid and Psyche," "The Continence of Scipio," and "Cymon and Iphigenia.

The work shows absolutely unimpaired powers; and he was as prominent a figure in Society, at the clubs, at dinners, at receptions, at picture auctions, as at any stage of his career. The "speaking" portrait of him from his own brush, in the Royal Collection, or its replica at Dulwich, brings him more vividly before us at this stage of his life than any verbal description; yet I venture to supplement the impression thus gained with a few words from Malone, his intimate friend, and his executor. Malone says: "He was in

¹ p. 174, S. W. Reynolds.

stature rather under the middle size, of a florid complexion, and a lively and pleasing aspect, well made, and extremely active. His appearance impressed the spectator with the idea of a well-born and well-bred English gentleman. With an uncommon equability of temper, which, however, never degenerated into insipidity or apathy, he possessed a constant flow of spirits, which rendered him at all times a most pleasing companion, always cheerful, and ready to be amused with whatever was going forward, and from an ardent thirst of knowledge anxious to obtain information on every subject that was presented to his mind. In conversation his manner was perfectly natural, simple, and unassuming. . . . He appeared to me the happiest man I have ever known

Suddenly, on Monday, July 13th, 1789, a calamity of the first magnitude befell him. While he was working on the portrait of a young lady, believed to be Miss Russell, the sight of his left eye became obscured. In a little over two months the sight of the eye was gone.

CHAPTER- XXI

THE LAST DAYS

Darkness—His malady—"Gutta Serena" described—Enforced idleness—Devotion of his niece—Misunderstandings with Academicians—Burke's note—Reynolds's death—Funeral—Conclusion.

THE shutting out of the beauty of the world from a soul whose chief delight was in its beauty, whose life had been devoted to its interpretation and expression, is at once pathetic and tragic. Fortune had struck the "invulnerable man," as Dr. Johnson affectionately called him, on his most vulnerable side. On that July day when he laid down his brushes he knew that his work was done. To Sheridan he wrote, in full consciousness of the fact: "The race is over, whether it is won or lost." To him, if ever to any, the noble words of Milton, who suffered from the same calamity, surely apply:—

“ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied,
 I fondly ask? But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
 Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

The “yoke” was borne by Reynolds bravely, quietly, and with all the dignity of his gentle nature.

He, fortunately, never entirely lost the sight of both eyes, but for two years his life was in shadow. Northcote describes his malady as “Gutta Serena.” On applying to my friend Mr. Stanford Morton, the distinguished Harley Street oculist (to whom my thanks are due), to ascertain from him what the nature of “Gutta Serena” is, he has kindly furnished me with the following information: “Gutta, Drop, Goutte, and our own Gout are terms that derive their origin from the theory, at one time in vogue, that all diseases were due to various ‘humours’ in the body. As applied to the eye the ‘Gutta Opaca’ was the term used to denote what we now call cataract, and was supposed to be due to an opaque drop or humour forming behind the pupil, and, as the term explains, it was opaque and therefore visible to an observer.

“When the sight was lost without any opacity being discernible by an observer, the blindness was supposed to be due to a transparent drop or humour, and hence called Gutta Serena or ‘clear’ drop. Various diseases were included in this term, which by means of the ophthalmoscope, etc., we are now able to differentiate, such as Glaucoma, atrophy of Optic Nerve, etc.; so that, had Reynolds’s disease been Glaucoma, it could very possibly have been cured by an operation—of which they knew nothing in his days, but which is now very usually successful. Further, this Glaucoma may certainly be brought on, or at any rate be made worse, by overstrain of the eyes, especially without the use of necessary glasses. Had the Gutta Serena been Optic Nerve Atrophy, probably nothing could have been done, at any rate by operation.

“Milton seems to have suffered also from Gutta Serena, as shown by his line—

‘So thick a drop serene hath quenched these orbs.’”

Northcote relates that during this trying period a young artist, Ozias Humphrey, read the newspapers to Sir Joshua while he breakfasted; and Sir Joshua, grateful for this attention, was wont each day to select pictures from his collection for his enjoyment. Although the

work of his life was, in a sense ended, he could not entirely lay aside his brushes. To the R.A. Exhibition of 1790 he sent seven pictures; but these had been practically completed before the great calamity. His niece mentions that now and again until the autumn of 1791 he painted on occasions. He was, apart from his blindness, in full bodily vigour. To outward appearance he remained calm and happy. He continued to receive his friends at his ever hospitable table, and at his Richmond villa; and he visited his friends in town and country. Malone describes how he and Sir Joshua, on returning from a visit to Burke, left their carriage and walked five miles together on a hot day without fatigue. "He had at that time, though above sixty-eight years of age," writes Malone, "the appearance of a man not much beyond fifty."

His devoted niece, Mary Palmer, was his constant companion and solace. She acted as his amanuensis, she spent much time in reading to him, and she arranged home card-parties such as he loved. Boswell tells us, "Miss Palmer's assiduity and attention to him in every respect is truly charming." From one of her letters of the time we gather that her uncle, no longer able to paint, "amuses himself by some-

times cleaning or mending a picture, for his ruling passion continues in full force, and he enjoys his pictures as much as ever." There is pathos in the little incident related by Northcote that in Reynolds's enforced idleness he made a pet of his canary, and used to walk to and fro in his room with it perched on his finger. When it escaped through the open window one morning Reynolds paced the square for hours trying in vain to coax it back.

He busied himself over the proposed monument to his old friend Dr. Johnson for St. Paul's Cathedral. When the usual difficulty in such undertakings of obtaining the necessary funds caused delay, he guaranteed to pay the last £300 from his own purse if required. It was chiefly by his efforts that Bacon's statue of Johnson obtained its place in the cathedral. It is fitting that in the same cathedral, separated only by the width of the transept, the fine statue of Reynolds from Flaxman's chisel, ere many years passed, should have been placed. In death the friends "were not divided."

It is pitiful that the last year or two of his life should have been clouded, as we have seen in a previous chapter, by dissensions with his brother Academicians over the appointment of

the Professor of Perspective. There was surely some lack of generosity in their treatment of him in these last days. When he appealed to the Academy for a donation towards the expenses of the Johnson statue, on the ground that Johnson had been their honorary Professor of Ancient Literature, his request was at first opposed, although ultimately reluctantly granted. Again, when he offered his collection of Old Masters to the Academy, at a very low price, on condition that they provided an Exhibition Room, they rejected his offer.

In May, 1791, the Swedish Royal Academy commissioned one of their own artists, Breda, to paint Sir Joshua's portrait. It was the last sitting he ever gave.

In the autumn his condition gave great anxiety to his friends. A tumour gathered over his left eye, and his general health began to suffer. He lost appetite, and, for the first time, became subject to moods of deep depression which the sympathy of friends, even such a friend as Fanny Burney who visited him, could only in part allay. "The grasshopper had become a burden." Burke, writing to his son, of his old friend, now dying, says: "Nothing can equal the tranquillity with which he views his end. He congratulates

himself on it as a happy conclusion to a happy life."

On Thursday evening, 23rd February, 1792, in his sixty-ninth year, Reynolds passed peacefully away.

All the petty dissensions were forgotten in the loss the nation felt it had sustained by his death. Every class united to do him honour. His funeral was of unwonted magnificence. His body "lay in state" at the Royal Academy rooms on the night preceding his funeral. On Saturday, 3rd March, 1792, he was borne to St. Paul's, accompanied by his fellow Academicians, the students of the Royal Academy, and by all who were most distinguished in the society of the time. He was laid to rest in the Crypt, in what is now known as "The Painters' Corner," close to the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren.

So passed away a gentle, noble spirit who brought his high ideals into practice in every department of life. He lived with eye and mind wide open to the beauty and joy of life, and his work materially added alike to the sum of human happiness and to the store of the world's treasures. As a painter his achievement, if limited in scope, is exquisite in character; in its kind, and at its best, it has

never been surpassed. This may be said, if is added what he would have been the first to say, that its kind is not the greatest in the hierarchy of Art. He was never content in his art merely to reveal outward beauty, master though he was at that; he aimed at revealing character moulded by the sorrows and joys, the defeats and victories of life; he aimed at revealing the beauty of the soul, where such beauty was to be found. The graciousness of motherhood, the divine charm of childhood, the intellectual nobility and strength of manhood as typified in Johnson, or Banks, or Hunter, were themes dearer to his art than the fleeting loveliness of the fashionable world, though in that too he found the link that binds it to immortality.

NOTE.

A COMPLETE list of the pictures of Sir Joshua Reynolds would fill a volume. It is obvious that only a selection of his most important works can here be given. Reynolds probably regarded the pictures that he contributed to the various Exhibitions of his time as being of his best, although many beautiful and famous pictures not in this list will occur to the student. On going carefully through the catalogues of the Royal Academy Exhibitions from 1769 to 1790, I found that Reynolds rarely mentioned the names of his sitters in his titles, merely contenting himself with such phrases as "portrait of a gentleman, half length," or "portrait of a lady, whole length," etc.; but with the aid of Walpole and the various annotators of the catalogues (see Anderdon's Collection, British Museum), and the careful work of Leslie and Taylor, a key to most of the names is obtained.

**LIST OF
PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED BY
SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS**

AT THE SOCIETY OF ARTS

- (1) 1760. (4 Pictures.)
Portrait of Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton.
Lady Elizabeth Keppel.
Lord C. Vernon in armour.
Portrait of a Gentleman, three-quarters length.

AT SPRING GARDENS

- (2) 1761. (5 Pictures.)
Lord Ligonier.
Sterne.
Lady Waldegrave.
Duke of Beaufort.
Captain Orme.
- (3) 1762. (3 Pictures.)
Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy.
Lady Elizabeth Keppel adorning statue of
Hymen.
Countess Waldegrave as Dido embracing Cupid.
- (4) 1763. (4 Pictures.)
John, Earl of Rothes.
Nelly O'Brien.
Ladies Henrietta and Elizabeth Montagu.
A Gentleman, three-quarters length.

PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED 187

- (5) 1764. (2 Pictures.)
Lady Sarah Bunbury.
Countess Dowager of Waldegrave.
- (6) 1765. (2 Pictures.)
Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces.
Portrait of a Lady (anon.).
- (7) 1766. (4 Pictures.)
Mrs. Hale.
Marquis of Granby.
Sir G. Amherst.
Mr. Paine and his Son.
- (8) 1767. Did not exhibit.
- (9) 1768. (1 Picture.)
Miss Jessie Cholmondeley carrying a Dog over
a brook.

AT ROYAL ACADEMY

- (10) 1769. (4 Pictures.)
Duchess of Manchester and Son as Diana dis-
arming Cupid.
Mrs. Blake as Juno receiving the Cestus from
Venus.
Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe.
Miss Morris as Hope nursing Love.
- (11) 1770. (8 Pictures.)
Lord Sidney and Colonel Acland as Archers.
Mrs. Bouverie and Child.
Miss Price as a Shepherdess.
Lady Cornwallis.
Children in the Wood.
Dr. Johnson.
Oliver Goldsmith.
G. Colman.

188 SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(12) 1771.

(6 Pictures.)

Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast
Accounts.

A Nymph and Bacchus.

"Offy" Palmer absorbed in *Clarissa*.

An Old Man (study for Ugolino).

Mrs. Abington.

A Gentleman (anon.).

(13) 1772.

(6 Pictures.)

Miss Meyer as Hebe.

Mrs. Crewe as Geneviève.

Dr. Robertson.

Mr. Hickey.

Mrs. Quarrington as St. Agnes.

Study from a model (White) as Captain of
Banditti.

(14) 1773.

(12 Pictures.)

Duke of Cumberland.

Duchess of Cumberland.

Duchess of Buccleuch.

Lady Melbourne and Child.

Mrs. Damer.

A Young Lady (anon.).

Mr. and Mrs. Garrick seated in a Garden.

Mr. Banks.

A Gentleman.

Mrs. Hartley, as Nymph, with Bacchus.

The Strawberry Girl.

Count Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon.

PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED 189

(15) 1774.

(13 Pictures.)

H. R. H. the Duchess of Gloucester.

Princess Sophia, daughter of Duchess of Gloucester.

Three Ladies adorning the Term of Hymen.

Mrs. Tollemache as Miranda.

Portrait of a Lady (anon.).

Lord Bellamont in Robes of the Order of the Bath.

Lady Cockburn and three Children.

Bishop Newton.

Dr. Beattie ("The Triumph of Truth").

Lord Edgcumbe's Son.

Head of Baretti.

An Infant Jupiter.

A Gentleman (anon.).

(16) 1775.

(12 Pictures.)

Countess of Dysart.

A Lady (anon.).

A Lady (anon.).

Lord Ferrers.

Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia.

Dr. Robinson (Primate of Ireland).

The Duke of Leinster.

Duke of Rutland's Children (brother and sister).

The Duchess of Gordon.

A Gentleman (anon.).

A Gentleman (anon.).

Boy, with Cabbage-Nets, and Sister.

190 SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(17) 1776.

(12 Pictures.)

Duchess of Devonshire (descending a Flight of Steps).

Mrs. Lloyd.

Lord Althorpe (in Vandyck dress).

Omiat.

Lord Temple.

Mrs. Montague.

Master Crewe as Henry the Eighth.

Duke of Devonshire.

David Garrick.

Master Herbert as Bacchus.

St. John.

Daniel.

(18) 1777.

(13 Pictures.)

Lady Frances Marsham.

Lady Derby.

Lady Bampfylde.

Family of the Duke of Bedford, and Miss Vernon.

A Young Nobleman (anon.).

Lady C. Montagu in the Snow.

Lady Elizabeth Herbert and Son.

A Lady (anon.).

Dr. Warton.

Mr. Gawler.

A Cupid asleep.

A Fortune-teller.

A Boy reading.

PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED 191

(19) 1778. (4 Pictures.)

The Duke of Marlborough's Family.
Archbishop of York.
Miss Campbell.
Mr. Campbell.

(20) 1779. (11 Pictures.)

The Nativity.	}	For New College Window, Oxford.
Faith.		
Hope.		
Charity.		
Lady Louisa Manners.		
Lady Crosbie.		
A Lady (anon.).		
A Young Lady (anon.).		
A Lady and Child (anon.).		
Andrew Stuart.		
A Gentleman (anon.).		

(21) 1780. (7 Pictures.)

Lady Beaumont.
Edward Gibbon.
Earl of Cholmondeley.
Lady Worsley.
Miss Beauclerk as Una.
Justice.
Prince William Frederick, son of the Duke of
Gloucester.

192 SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(22) 1781. (14 Pictures.)

Thais.
Dr. Burney.
Mr. Thoroton.
Duke of Rutland's Children.
Death of Dido.
Lord Richard Cavendish.
The three Ladies Waldegrave.
Duchess of Rutland.
Countess of Salisbury.
Temperance. } For Oxford window.
Fortitude. }
A Child asleep.
Master Bunbury.
A Listening Boy.

(23) 1782. (15 Pictures.)

Mr. W. Beckford.
Mrs. Robinson ("Perdita").
Lady Aylesford.
Children.
An Angel (for Oxford window).
Bishop of Rochester.
Colonel Tarleton.
Colonel Windham.
Lady Althorp.
Lord Chancellor Thurlow.
Mrs. Baldwin ("a Grecian Lady").
Lady G. H. Cavendish.
A Girl.
Lady Talbot.
A Lady (anon.).

PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED 193

(24) 1783. (10 Pictures.)

Mrs. Gosling.
Mr. Brummell.
Miss Faulkner.
A Lady (anon.).
Children.
Children.
Lord Albemarle.
Duke of Buccleuch.
A Lady (anon.).
Mr. Strahan.

(25) 1784. (16 Pictures.)

Mrs. Abington as Roxalana
Dr. Chauncy.
Mr. Pott.
Archbishop of Tuam.
Lady Honeywood and Child.
H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.
C. J. Fox.
Lady Dashwood and Child.
Master Braddyll.
Sir John Honeywood.
Lord Leveson.
Miss Wilson and Cupid.
Miss Kemble.
Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse.
Mr. Warton.
A Boy reading.

(Against No. 320f in the Royal Academy Catalogue for 1784 there is entered, under Miniatures, "Portrait of a young lady," by Sir Joshua. It is surmised that his name was printed in error for that of his sister, Frances Reynolds.)

194 SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

(26) 1785. (16 Pictures.)

Mrs. Smith.
Lady Hume.
Mrs. Masters.
Sir H. Munroe.
Lord Northington.
Venus.
H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.
A Gentleman (anon.).
Duke of Rutland's Children.
An Officer (anon.).
A Nobleman (anon.).
Hon. Mrs. Stanhope.
A Lady (anon.).
An Officer (anon.).
A Lady (anon.).
A Little Girl.

(27) 1786. (13 Pictures.)

A Young Gentleman (anon.).
Mr. Erskine.
Two Children of Lady Lucan.
Duke of Orleans.
Lady Taylor.
Solicitor-General (J. Lee).
Duchess of Devonshire and Daughter.
Mr. Joshua Sharpe.
Lady Spencer.
A Gentleman (anon.).
John Hunter.
Miss K. Bingham.
A Child with Guardian Angels.

PICTURES PUBLICLY EXHIBITED 195

(28) 1787.

(13 Pictures.)

Lady Smyth and Children.
A Child's portrait in different views—Lord
William Gordon's Daughter.
Miss Ward and her Dog.
Sir Harry Englefield.
Hon. Mrs. Stanhope.
H. R. H. the Prince of Wales.
Lady St. Asaph and Child.
James Boswell.
Lord Burghersh hunting a Butterfly.
Master Yorke, with Bird and Dog.
A Lady Kit-Kat (Lady Cadogan).
Mrs. W. Hope.
A Lady (anon.).

(29) 1788.

(17 Pictures.)

Lord Sheffield.
Mr. Wyndham.
A Girl sleeping.
Lady E. Foster.
Sir G. Beaumont.
Lord Heathfield.
Mrs. Drummond Smith.
Master Stanhope.
Colonel Morgan.
Lord Darnley.
Hercules strangling Snakes.
Lord Grantham and Brothers.
Colonel Bertie.
Lady Harris.
Miss Gideon and Brother.
Duke of York.
Girl and Kitten.

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(30) 1789. (12 Pictures.)

Hon. Mrs. Watson.
Robin Goodfellow.
Miss Gwatkin ("Simplicity").
Cymon and Iphigenia.
The Continnence of Scipio.
Lord Rodney.
Cupid and Psyche.
Lord Lifford.
Lord H. Fitzgerald.
R. B. Sheridan.
A Landscape (View of Castle Wilgur on the
Rhine).
Lord Vernon.

(31) 1790. (7 Pictures.)

Sir James Esdale.
Lord Rawdon.
Mrs. Billington, the Singer.
Mrs. Cholmondeley.
Sir J. Leicester.
A Young Lady (anon.).
Sir Joshua's Portrait.

WORKS OF REFERENCE

Best of all : the original paintings and drawings by Sir Joshua Reynolds, wherever and whenever available.

The twelve large albums of mezzo-tints, stipple, and line-engravings, including the additional larger folio, in the Print Room of the British Museum.

Reynolds's sketch-books in the British Museum and in Soane's Museum.

Royal Academy Catalogues (illustrated) in Print Room, British Museum (Anderdon).

Mezzo-tints published in two volumes by S. W. Reynolds, 1820, with Messrs. Graves's Continuation in additional two volumes, 1865.

BOOKS

Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds. By James Northcote, R.A. 2nd edition. 2 vols. Colburn, 1818.

Memoirs of the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds. By Joseph Farington, R.A. Cadell, 1819.

Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Rob. Leslie, R.A.; continued by Tom Taylor, M.A. 2 vols. Murray, 1865.

The Literary Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds. By W. Beechey, R.A. 1835.

[It is fitting that the best biographies of Reynolds should have been written by artists. Northcote is long-winded, but his testimony is "first-hand." He conveys

a vivid impression of the man. Farington's memoir, though little more than a biographical sketch, is excellent in fair-minded criticism. Leslie writes with a full knowledge and appreciation of the artistic side, and Taylor is luminous on the literary and historical side. To Northcote and to Leslie every succeeding biographer owes much.]

The Life and Writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds. By Edmond Malone. Cadell, 1819.

Interesting side-light is thrown on Reynolds's career and work by (1) Walpole's Letters; (2) Miss Burney's Diaries; (3) Burke's Correspondence; (4) Cotton's *Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Works*; (5) Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*; (6) *Autobiography of Mrs. Piozzi*; (7) Hazlitt's *Conversations of James Northcote, R.A.*; (8) Haydon's autobiography; (9) Forster's *Life of Goldsmith*.

Allan Cunningham in his *Essay on Reynolds* (John Murray, 1829) slavishly follows Northcote, but where Northcote, who knew Reynolds and loved him, eulogises, Cunningham pours vinegar, and occasionally vitriol, on Reynolds's fair name.

Short studies of Reynolds are to be found in (1) Mr. Comyns Carr's *Papers on Art* (Macmillan, 1885); (2) F. G. Stephens' *Essay on Reynolds's "English Children"* (Remington, 1884); (3) Loftie's *Reynolds and Children's Portraiture in England* (Blackie); (4) C. Phillips' *Life* (Seeley); (5) F. S. Pulling's *Sir Joshua Reynolds* (Samson Low and Co., 1880); (6) Sidney Colvin's *Joshua Reynolds*. Portfolio. 1873.

Readers of Mr. Ruskin will be familiar with many references to Sir Joshua in his voluminous writings. See *Modern Painters*; *Lectures on Art*; *Two Paths*; and

WORKS OF REFERENCE 199

an admirable Essay (*Cornhill*, March, 1860) on "Sir Joshua and Holbein."

Sir Walter Armstrong's magnificent volume (Heinemann, 1900), beautifully illustrated, sums up all that has been said of Reynolds's career.

A Catalogue Raisonné of the Engraved Works of Joshua Reynolds. E. Hamilton. London, 1874.

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British Museum Official Catalogue of Drawings by British Artists. Vol. iii. L. Binyon. Longmans, 1902.

Stephen Gwynn's *Memorials of an Eighteenth-Century Painter—James Northcote.* T. F. Unwin.

There is interesting criticism of Reynolds's work and influence from a foreign standpoint in (1) M. Ernest Chesneau's *English School of Painting* (Cassel); (2) Herr R. Muther's *History of Modern Painting* (vol. i., Henry).

(1) *Some Account of the Ancient Borough of Plympton* (Cotton); (2) R. N. Worth's *History of Devonshire* (Stock).

The articles in (1) *Dictionary of National Biography*, "Reynolds," by Cosmo Monkhouse; (2) in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* by J. M. Gray, are brief, but excellent, summaries of Sir Joshua Reynolds's life.

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