

the thing I liked best. But in those days I never wanted to think but as he thought, and every word of his thrilled me through and through. And then how boundless was his generosity, how royal the praise with which he blessed our feeble efforts, how untiring the pains which he took to help us, not only by his teaching and encouragement, but in more direct and practical ways, by finding us patrons and employment, introducing us to his own friends—of all of which a beautiful and golden record is somewhere written. What a world it was! and he the centre and light of it all!

The genius of Rossetti was a theme of which Burne-Jones never wearied. He grew eloquent as he described those wonderful little five-inch pictures, containing a whole world of passion, *Dante and Beatrice*, *Paolo and Francesca*, *Christ at the Feast of Simon*, and told how, as he watched the painter at work, he felt that if he would only paint these on a larger scale, the whole world must stop and wonder. *We shall be carrying him in triumph upon our shoulders, and the traffic in Fleet Street will be stopped and all the people will shout for joy. But when the great pictures came, they were sadly disappointing—*

big single women with large unnatural lips and strained attitudes, and light and fresh air shut out by heavy curtains and the hot close scent of tropical flowers. All the really great work of Rossetti was crowded into ten years—O, the marvel of it all!—and then that wonderful romantic imagination, which no painter ever rivalled, which was big enough to fill the whole world, failed and fell short of greatness because it could not master technique. Then decay set in—the Olympians were unkind to him—his wife died; there was a little madness followed by a terrible period of death in life, and all the glory of that marvellous promise faded slowly away.

But to the end Burne-Jones insisted that Rossetti's true character was never properly understood, and that he was a nobler and a better man than the world ever knew. "Even those who owed him most," he complained, "spoke coldly of him and only recalled the failures and mistakes of his later years, which was merely the dust that should be blown from off his face." This profound conviction sometimes inspired Burne-Jones with the wish to write his friend's life—"make out some sort of image of him—and if it is a perfect image and